

ED 368 943

CE 066 275

AUTHOR Osher, David; And Others
 TITLE Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches. Training Packet for a Three-Session Workshop. Study of ABE/ESL Instructor Training Approaches.
 INSTITUTION Pelavin Associates, Inc., Washington, DC.
 SPONS AGENCY Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
 PUB DATE 93
 CONTRACT VN90001001
 NOTE 273p.; For related documents, see ED 338 605, ED 344 054-056, and CE 066 274-281. Parts of this document may not reproduce well.
 AVAILABLE FROM Albany Educational Television, 27 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12230 (related videotape, "Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities").
 PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; *Adult Basic Education; Adult Educators; Adult Learning; Adult Students; Disability Discrimination; Educational Discrimination; Educational Planning; *English (Second Language); *Equal Education; Instructional Materials; *Learning Disabilities; *Teacher Education; Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Workshops; Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods; Transparencies

ABSTRACT

This training packet on learner-centered approaches for learning disabled students is 1 of 10 developed by the Study of Adult Basic Education (ABE)/English as a Second Language (ESL) Training Approaches Project to assist ABE instructors, both professionals and volunteers. The packet is intended to stand alone and encompasses a three-session workshop series with activities scheduled for participants to accomplish between sessions. Ideally, the sessions should take place about 1 month apart. Introductory materials include information about the series and the training packet, a workshop overview (objectives, time, materials checklist, preparations checklist), and workshop outline for each session. Trainer notes for each session include a checklist of tasks to be completed before the session and an outline of activities with necessary materials and times. Topics covered in the sessions are as follows: what a learning disability is; attitudes, barriers, and accommodation; plan for learning; teacher research and collaboration; developing a monitoring plan and strategy; and accessing and using resources. Time is allowed for preparation for the home task and feedback on the home task. Trainer's supplements, including alternative activities, follow. Masters for all handouts and transparencies needed in the sessions are provided. One of the seven supplementary readings for the sessions is a list of 63 references. (YLB)

**STUDY OF ABE/ESL INSTRUCTOR
TRAINING APPROACHES**

**Training Packet for
a Three-Session Workshop on**

**LEARNING DISABILITIES:
LEARNER-CENTERED
APPROACHES**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

* This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

* Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

Authors:

**David Osher, Pelavin Associates, Inc.
Lenore Webb, Pelavin Associates, Inc.
Sandra Koehler, Adult Learning Resource Center**

**Office of Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education
ED Contract No. VN90001001
COTR: Bernice Anderson**

**Pelavin Associates, Inc.
2030 M Street, N.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
Project Director: Mark A. Kutner**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to acknowledge and thank the New York State Education Department, Office of Workforce Preparation and Continuing Education, for providing the video for this training packet. Copies may be purchased by contacting:

Albany Educational Television
27 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
(518) 465-4741

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE ABE/ESL INSTRUCTOR TRAINING SERIES	1
ABOUT THE LEARNING DISABILITIES TRAINING PACKET	3
WORKSHOP OVERVIEW	5
Objectives, Time, Materials Checklist, and Preparations Checklist	
WORKSHOP OUTLINE: SESSIONS ONE, TWO, AND THREE	6
Materials, Activities, and Time Allotments	
BEFORE SESSION ONE	9
TRAINER NOTES: SESSION ONE	10
I. Introduction, Workshop Overview	10
II. Adults First and Last	12
III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability	13
IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation	20
V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person	24
VI. Interim Task Assignment	25
VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation	27
BEFORE SESSION TWO	28
TRAINER NOTES: SESSION TWO	29
I. Introduction/Workshop Overview	29
II. Review of Session One	31
III. Review of Interim Task Assignment	31
IV. Planning for Learning	32

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

V.	Interim Task Assignment	39
VI.	Evaluation and Wrap-Up	40
BEFORE SESSION THREE		41
TRAINER NOTES: SESSION THREE		42
I.	Introduction/Workshop Overview	42
II.	The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration	43
III.	Review of Session Two and Interim Task Assignment	45
IV.	Planning for Learning	46
V.	Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy	49
VI.	Accessing and Using Resources	50
VII.	How Do You Make It Happen?	51
VIII.	Reflection on Workshop Processes	52
IX.	Evaluation and Wrap-Up	53
TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS		
SESSION ONE		
	Adults First and Last	54
	On Defining Learning Disabilities: An Emerging Consensus	55
	A Working Definition: Session One	66
	Alternative ESL Scenario	67
	Alternative Case Study: Ron White	68
SESSION THREE		
	Screening: Some Cautionary Notes	70
	Reflective Practice, Action Research, and Collaboration	71

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Continued)

HANDOUT MASTERS

SESSION ONE

H-1: Flyer for Workshop (announcing all sessions)	H-1
H-2: Participant Questionnaire	H-2 a-b
H-3: Person Search	H-3
H-4: Workshop Objectives, Session One Agenda	H-4
H-5: Glossary	H-5
H-6: Adults First and Last	H-6
H-7: Visualizing Learning Differences, Learning Difficulties, and Learning Disabilities	H-7
H-8: Continuum of Learning Differences and Difficulties	H-8
H-9: Defining Learning Disabilities	H-9
H-10: Barriers	H-10
H-11: Evaluation Summary Report to a Student	H-11
H-12: Test Interpretation and Recommendations Report to a Teacher	H-12
H-13: Matrix: Students with Learning Difficulties	H-13
H-14-a: Scenario: Looking at the Whole Person	H-14-a
H-14-b: Scenario Focus Questions	H-14-b
H-15: Adult Roles	H-15
H-16: Interim Task Assignments	H-16 a-c
H-17: Session One Evaluation	H-17 a-d

SESSION TWO

H-18: Reminder	H-18
H-19: Session Two Agenda	H-19
H-20: Person Search Part 2	H-20
H-21: Interim Task Assignment Review, Part I	H-21
H-22: Review Interim Task Assignment Review, Part II	H-22
H-23: Planning for Learning	H-23 a-d
H-24: Video Focus Chart	H-24
H-25: Needs Assessment Model	H-25 a-c
H-26-a: Interim Task Assignment	H-26-a
H-26-b: Interim Task Assignment Two: Planning Guide	H-26-b
H-27: Tool Kit	H-27 a-g
H-28: Session Two Evaluation	H-28 a-d

SESSION THREE

H-29: Reminder	H-21
H-30: Session Three Agenda	H-30
H-31: Person Search Part 3	H-31
H-32: Reflective Teaching	H-32

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

H-33: The Teacher as Researcher	H-33
H-34: Collaborative Research	H-34
H-35: Review of Interim Task Assignment Two	H-35
H-36-a: Targeting Tool	H-36-a
H-36-b: Input, Integration, and Output of Information	H-36-b
H-37: Planning for Learning Tool	H-37
H-38: Needs, Goals, and Objectives	H-38
H-39: From Needs Assessment to Monitoring to Goals	H-39
H-40: Resources on Adults with Learning Disabilities	H-40
H-41: Session Three Evaluation	H-41 a-d
TRANSPARENCY MASTERS	77
SESSION ONE	
T-A: Session One Agenda	T-A
T-B: Adults First and Last	T-B
T-C: Visualizing Learning Differences, Learning Difficulties, and Learning Disabilities	T-C
T-D: Continuum of Learning Differences and Problems	T-D
T-E: Defining Learning Disabilities	T-E
T-F: What Learning Disability is Not	T-F
T-G: Matrix: Students with Learning Difficulties	T-G
T-H: Scenario Focus Questions	T-H
T-I: Interim Task Assignment	T-I
SESSION TWO	
T-J: Session Two Agenda	T-J
T-K: Interim Task Assignment Review	T-K
T-L: Student Profile	T-L
T-M: Planning for Learning	T-M a-d
T-N: Video Focus Chart	T-N
SESSION THREE	
T-O: Session Three Agenda	T-O
T-P: Interim Task Assignment Two: Planning Guide	T-P
T-Q: Targeting Tool	T-Q
T-R: Input, Integration, and Output of Information	T-R
T-S: Planning for Learning Tool	T-S
T-T: Needs, Goals, and Objectives	T-T

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Continued)

T-U: From Needs Assessment to Monitoring to Goals	T-U
T-V: Reflections on Workshop Processes	T-V

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

SESSION ONE

R-1: References	R-1
R-2: Succeeding Against the Odds	R-2

SESSION TWO

R-3: Learning Differently: Meeting the Needs of Adults with Learning Disabilities	R-3
---	-----

SESSION THREE

R-4: Adults with Learning Disabilities: An Overview for the Adult Educator	R-4
R-5: Adults with Learning Disabilities: How to Get an Appropriate Assessment of the Problem	R-5
R-6: Cooper Screening of Information Processing	R-6
R-7: Vocational Rehabilitation	R-7

Introduction to THE ABE/ESL INSTRUCTOR TRAINING SERIES

Scope and Content

The Study of ABE/ESL Training Approaches Project has developed ten training packets to assist ABE and ESL instructors, both professionals and volunteers. Packet topics were selected based on a national review of training content and practices and on recommendations from selected experts representing ABE, ESL, and volunteer programs across the United States.

Packet topics include:

1. The Adult Learner
2. Planning for Instruction
3. Team Learning
4. Monitoring Student Progress
5. Volunteers and Teachers in the Classroom
6. Communicative ESL Teaching
7. Mathematics: Strategic Problem Solving
8. Whole Language Approach
9. Improving Thinking Skills for Adult Learners
10. Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches

There is no suggested sequence implied in the above listing. Each packet is intended to stand alone. Each encompasses a two- or three-session workshop series with activities scheduled for participants to accomplish between sessions. Ideally, the sessions should take place about one month apart. Packets include detailed instructions for workshop leaders and masters for all handouts and transparencies needed in the workshops.

Key Assumptions about Adult Learning

All packets have been designed to guide workshop leaders to model the adult learning principles upon which the packets are based. These principles apply to the training of instructors as well as to educating adult students. Based on the literature about adult learners and the experience of skilled adult educators, *it is assumed that adults learn best when:*

- they feel *comfortable* with the learning environment and they attempt tasks that allow them to *succeed* within the contexts of their limited time and demanding lives.
- they provide *input* into the planning of their own learning goals and processes.
- they have opportunities to engage in *social learning*, i.e., they learn from peers as well as from an instructor.

- they have a *variety* of options appropriate to their learning styles (including sensory modalities, ways of thinking, and both individual and group learning) and have opportunities to analyze and expand their modes of learning
- they are able to associate new learning with previous *experiences* and to use those experiences while learning.
- they have an opportunity to apply *theory/information* to practical situations in their own lives.

In accord with these assumptions, each packet employs research-based components of effective training and staff development: *theory, demonstrations, practice, structured feedback, and application with follow-up*. Key research findings on these components are:

1. The *theory* that underlies any new practice is a necessary but insufficient component of training.
2. *Demonstrations* that illustrate new practices and reinforce their use are essential to full comprehension and implementation.
3. Instructors need to *practice* new approaches in a safe environment and to receive *structured feedback* on their attempts.
4. New approaches need to be *applied* over time in a real situation — preferably ones where continuing feedback and analysis are possible (e.g., peer coaching or mentoring).

Research indicates that long-term change is likely to occur only when all of the above conditions are met.

We hope you will find that these training packets produce effective, long-term results.

About the LEARNING DISABILITIES TRAINING PACKET

This training packet employs selected research-based components of effective training and staff development in the following manner:

THEORY: Inductive and deductive formats are used in presenting theory. This approach requires participants to extract theory from experiential activities rather than memorize theory from a lecture (a deductive format). Through scenarios, role playing, and exercises that involve the use and analysis of tools and approaches used in working with adults with learning problems and disabilities, participants learn about and internalize theory by discussing it with others.

DEMONSTRATION: Scenarios, along with a video interview of two adults with learning disabilities, are combined with focused questions to enable participants to identify and understand: (1) learning styles and differences, (2) learning strengths, (3) ways to build on learning strengths, (4) barriers to learning, and (5) instructional strategies for accommodating learner differences.

PRACTICE: Between workshop sessions, participants will have an opportunity to practice identifying student learning styles and strengths as a basis for developing and/or modifying instruction.

STRUCTURED FEEDBACK: During Sessions Two and Three, participants will have an opportunity to develop and/or modify instruction for accommodating learning differences by building on learning strengths.

APPLICATION: Finally, participants will be able to reflectively develop new strategies and modify approaches in working with all adult learners.

REFLECTION ON WORKSHOP PROCESSES: At several points during the workshop, participants are required to analyze workshop activities after completing them. During these analyses, participants think about the types of thinking and learning that the activities stimulate. As a result, participants become conscious of the theories and assumptions that underlie and guide this training packet.

During these training sessions, "learning by doing" will be the focus. Participants will experience new instructional approaches, and then will reflect upon, analyze, and generalize from their experiences. Such learning is more likely to be remembered and used than is rote learning.

About the Participants...

This training packet is designed for ABE, ESL, and volunteer instructors. Because the content of this packet builds upon theories of complex thinking, it is important for all participants to be involved in all three workshop sessions.

In this training packet, participants work in "like groups" only during selected activities. At these times, small groups of ABE instructors and ESL instructors will be formed. Volunteer instructors will join whichever group most closely approximates their major teaching assignment.

REGARDING THE SUGGESTED TIMES: All suggested times are the result of field testing within a three- to four-hour timeframe. Feel free to adjust the suggested times to meet the needs and experience levels of the participants. In addition, it is important to become familiar with the materials prior to the workshop in order to select specific activities if sufficient time is not provided or some activities take longer than anticipated. Familiarity with the materials also will enable you to personalize the materials by adding anecdotes where appropriate. If more than three hours are available for the training, the suggested times can be expanded to allow for additional sharing and discussion.

REGARDING THE ROOM SET-UP: Since the workshop includes both large and small group work, arrange the room so that participants can move about fairly easily. Try to make certain that the flip charts, overheads, or videos can be seen by all participants. In less than ideal settings, you may have to consider eliminating the use of overheads or flip charts.

REGARDING TRAINING PREPARATION: Before reading through these notes, the trainer should carefully read the articles included as background information (pages 53-69). If participants would benefit from reading any of these articles, duplicate them and include them in the Interim Task Assignment Packet (Handout 16a-c).

A primary goal for the trainer should be to strive to "do no harm"; that is, the workshop should minimize the following outcomes:

- The tendency of some teachers to identify as learning disabled those students whom they cannot work with.
- The tendency of teachers to over-identify as learning disabled those students who are culturally and/or linguistically different.
- The tendency of teachers, when confronted with what they understand as a disability, to lower expectations rather than to adjust approaches and maintain or even heighten expectations.
- The tendency to employ a deficit as opposed to a strengths model.
- The tendency to believe that there is a simple fix for learning disabilities.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Objectives: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities.
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and learning needs.
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning.
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities.
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

Time: Total time required for the workshop: approximately 10 hours:

- Session One: 3 hours
- Interim Activities at Home Sites: approximately 2-4 hours over a one-month period
- Session Two: 3½ hours
- Interim Activities at Home Sites: approximately 2-6 hours over a one-month period
- Session Three: 3 hours

Materials

Checklist: Hardware:

- VHS Player (½-inch) and Monitor
- Overhead Projector
- Flip Chart (optional)

Software:

- Video: "Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities" (VHS Cassette)
- Packet Handouts
- Packet Transparencies
- Blank Transparencies and Transparency Pens

Preparations

Checklist:

- Tally results of the Participant Questionnaire.
- Duplicate handouts.
- Check equipment to be sure that it is working properly and that the video is cued up to the beginning.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE SESSION ONE

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-3*, H-4, H-5, T-A*	I. Introduction/Workshop Overview • Icebreaker Activity • Agenda, Objectives	15 min.
H-6, T-B	II. Adults First and Last	25 min.
Blank Transparency, H-5, H-7, H-8, H-9, T-C, T-D, T-E, T-F	III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability • From Difference to Disability • A Working Definition	35 min.
B R E A K		15 min.
H-10, H-11, H-12, H-13, T-G	IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation	35 min.
H-14a-b, H-15, T-H (multiple copies)	V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person	30 min.
H-16a-c, T-I	VI. Interim Task Assignment	15 min.
H-17a-d	VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation	10 min.

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

WORKSHOP OUTLINE SESSION TWO

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-19*, T-J*, H-20	I. Introductions/Workshop Overview • Agenda, Objectives • Opening Exercise	30 min.
H-21, T-K	II. Review of Session One	15 min.
H-16a-c, H-22, T-L (multiple copies), Transparency Pens	III. Review of Interim Task Assignment	40 min.
	B R E A K	15 min.
H-23a-d, H-24, H-25a-c, T-Ma-d, T-N	IV. Planning for Learning • Instructional Process • Video Demonstration • Conducting a Needs Assessment	85 min.
H-26a-c, H-27a-g	V. Interim Task Assignment 2	10 min.
H-28a-d	VI. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

WORKSHOP OUTLINE **SESSION THREE**

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-29, H-30, H-31, T-O	I. Introductions/Workshop Overview	15 min.
H-32, H-33, H-34	II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration	20 min.
H-26a-b, H-35, T-P	III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task	35 min.
	B R E A K	15 min.
H-36a-b, H-37, H-38, T-Q, T-R, T-S, T-T	IV. Planning for Learning • Targeting Areas of Need • Developing a Learning Plan	40 min.
H-39, T-U	V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy	25 min.
H-40	VI. Accessing and Using Resources • Potential Resources • Accommodations	15 min.
	VII. How Do You Make It Happen?	10 min.
T-V	VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes	10 min.
H-41a-d	IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.

TRAINER NOTES

SESSION ONE

BEFORE SESSION ONE

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session One of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send out flyers** announcing the workshop series. (See handout H-1 for a sample.)
- ☐ **Send the Participant Questionnaire** (H-2a-b) to all persons responding to the flyer. The suggested maximum of participants for each workshop series is 30 persons. The Questionnaire asks participants to have in mind an example of one student they are working with and with whom they would like their teaching to be more effective. They will revisit this student at various points during the workshops, and ideally, work with that individual for interim task assignments.
- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session One** (H-3 through H-17) and arrange them into packets. Staple together those handouts that have more than one page. By providing one packet of materials to each individual, constant handling of materials during the session can be avoided.
- ☐ **Make transparencies** from the Transparency Masters provided for Session One (T-A through T-I). Make enough copies of T-H for one per group of participants.
- ☐ **Tally the results of the Participant Questionnaire.** (This can be done easily on a blank copy of the Participant Questionnaire.) You may also want to make a transparency of those results to share with participants.
- ☐ **Order all equipment** (VHS player, monitor, and overhead projector) and make sure it is operating correctly. Also check the size of the screen and clarity of print from the back of the room.
- ☐ **Obtain name tags** for participants.
- ☐ **Arrange for a place** to hold Session One and make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out activities. Consider which room arrangement will best facilitate your activities. Ideally, the room should be set up with tables seating four to six participants each.
- ☐ **Prepare a sign-in sheet** to verify attendance at both workshops. Include space for names, addresses and phone numbers for future contact with participants.
- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments** that will be available.
- ☐ **Read the Trainer Notes for Session One**, pages 10 through 27. **Review handouts** H-3 through H-16 and transparencies T-A through T-I. Read background articles provided in Supplementary Readings and Trainer Supplement materials.

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION ONE

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****I. Introduction/Workshop Overview****15 min.****A. Icebreaker Activity****H-3***

As an opening activity, have participants refer to H-3, "Person Search," a scavenger hunt-type exercise. Explain that participants must walk around the room to question one another to fill signatures on the appropriate line. They may not use the same person twice. The person who collects the most signatures wins some small prize that the trainer designates.

The objective of the activity is for participants to get to know more about one another. The larger purpose of this activity is to highlight the importance of finding out more about the whole person, as participants will be doing with their students in different ways.

NOTE: An understanding of the whole person is central to an adult-centered, strength-based approach to learning disabilities. Because of this, the trainer will invoke the participants' experience in this exercise when they begin to work on Interim Task Assignment 1, H-16a-c.

When participants have finished the activity, ask them to take one minute to introduce themselves to one person next to them and ask that person what his or her preferred learning style is (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, working in groups, working alone).

Ask participants what kinds of things they learned about one another as they went through the scavenger hunt and when they introduced themselves. What were some of the different learning styles of their neighbors? The trainer should synthesize these learning styles and note that the workshop takes into account several types of learners. For

* "H" = "Handout"

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

example, some people are auditory learners, hence the verbal presentations. Others tend to learn in a more visual way, so there will be visual aids used. Still others are tactile-kinesthetic learners, so we will have some "hands-on" activities. Activities will vary so that participants will do some things alone, in pairs, in small groups, or as part of the whole group. Reiterate that we all learn differently.

NOTE: The wealth of information in this packet requires that the trainer assess the needs of the participants and determine the depth of the presentation relative to their needs and experience.

H-4, T-A*

B. Agenda, Objectives

Direct participants' attention to H-4 and display T-A. Go over the agenda and session objectives. Explain that this workshop is not intended to provide comprehensive training on diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities. It focuses on what teachers and tutors can do to work more effectively with students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Inform participants that the workshop will provide:

- An awareness of the needs of adult students who learn differently, face learning difficulties, or have learning disabilities.
- A working definition of learning differences and learning disabilities.
- Strategies for identifying both students' learning strengths and the learning difficulties that they face.
- Learner-centered approaches to matching instructional strategies to student strengths.
- An opportunity to apply concepts to their own teaching situations.
- An overview of resources that teachers and programs may want to draw upon.

* 'T' = "Transparency"

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

H-5a-b

NOTE: Stress that due to the many factors that affect the learning process, "diagnosis" of a learning disability or identification of someone as having a learning disability should be done **ONLY** by trained professionals using validated methods in a culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner. Remind participants of this at appropriate points during the workshop presentation. (See H-5a-b, Glossary, for definitions of these terms.)

II. Adults First and Last

25 min.

Once a disability is identified or suspected, teachers often focus on the disability to the exclusion of the students' goals, strengths, and social context. The purpose of this activity is to enable participants to recognize and internalize the concept that all adult learners, whether or not they have a learning disability, have similar motivations, goals, attitudes, and abilities.

H-6

Direct participants' attention to H-6, "Adults First and Last." Divide the participants into small groups of four to six people. Review each section of H-6, clarifying the questions. Announce that there will be 10 minutes for group discussion.

T-B

Display T-B. Select one group to give their responses to the first category, motivation. Then, open the discussion to all groups and record responses on T-B. Discuss implications for instructions.

NOTE: See Trainer's Supplement page 54 for suggestions of possible student responses and implications for instruction.

Continue this process, selecting another group to respond to the goals, and then have all the other groups respond to: (1) attitudes, (2) ability to learn, (3) social and cultural factors, and (4) learning environment in an open fashion. Summarize the discussion by reminding participants that this exercise reflects the characteristics of *all* adult learners — independent of whether they have a disability.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

NOTE: The one category in which participants may see an area of difference between adults who experience learning difficulties and those who don't is in the attitudes toward learning.

III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability?

35 min.

A. From Difference to Disability**H-7, T-C**

After observing that we all learn differently, ask the group for one or two examples. If none are forthcoming, or if the responses are inappropriate, refer to their examples at the beginning of this workshop when they identified themselves and their preferred learning styles. Were participants taught to their strengths and preferred learning styles when they were in school? Ask participants to think about students they are working with. Do the different ways some students learn ever pose a challenge for them?

Indicate that in addition to people who just differ in learning style, we can distinguish two other groups: (1) Some learners have learning problems; (2) Among these, a smaller group has learning problems that may actually be learning disabilities. Refer participants to the circle diagram in H-7 (point to transparency T-C).

H-5a-b

After distinguishing between a learning difference, a learning difficulty, and a learning disability, note that experts may disagree regarding when a difference becomes a learning difficulty and when a learning difficulty becomes a learning disability (i.e., what are the boundaries — the cut points — between what constitutes a difference, difficulty, or disability).

NOTE: Refer to the Glossary, H-5, for basic definitions of these terms.

MATERIALS

ACTIVITIES

TIMES

11-8

Since the categories are judgmental and subject to disagreement, it is important to provide participants with an opportunity to visualize the differences between a learning difference, a learning problem (or difficulty), and a learning disability. As an alternative to the circle illustration (H-7), the trainer can illustrate these differences graphically by conceptualizing a continuum. (We have adapted a model used by Richard Cooper, of the Center for Alternative Learning in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania (see H-8).

Blank
Transparency
or Flip Chart

Using a flip chart or blank transparency, draw a line, explaining that it represents the universe of individuals who just learn differently from other students and who could profit from some modification of the curriculum or learning environment. Ask for an example. If none is provided or if the example given is inappropriate, provide one (e.g., if you were teaching math with a predominantly oral approach to a student who learns best in a tactile-kinesthetic way, you could adapt your teaching approach to provide manipulatives to enable the student to grasp concepts more easily). Draw a second line beneath learning differences starting further to the right and observe that this part of the continuum includes students who have learning problems or difficulties that make it harder for them to learn.

Learning difficulties may involve how individuals take in information — what some call *input*; how they *process* or integrate the information that they take in; or how they get information out — what some call *output*.

H-8, T-D

Ask again for an example of students who learn differently and then observe that, depending on the severity of their learning problems, such students may or may not have a learning disability. Inform the participants that while some experts might define all the learners with learning problems as having learning disabilities, others, like Cooper, suggest that learning disabilities are found in the third line, placed at the right end — the "severe"

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

portion — of the continuum. Refer participants to H-8 for a completed illustration of the continuum. Display T-D on the overhead.

To enable the teachers to start internalizing these distinctions (beyond their initial impressions from the circle diagram, H-7), ask them to think about the student they "brought" as an example or to think about another student they have. Where would they place that student on the continuum (H-8, T-D)? To provide the trainer and the participants with some context, point to different positions on the continuum and ask for a show of hands regarding how many participants would locate their students at each position. Did the introduction of this alternative illustration change their perception of where their students might fit?

B. A Working Definition

The importance of definitions. To better understand the distinctions between learning *differences*, learning *difficulties*, and learning *disabilities*, we need to understand what a learning disability is and what it is not.

Begin by explaining that (in addition to disagreeing about the cut points) experts do not agree on exactly what a learning disability is. At least 15 different definitions have been proposed by various researchers and learning disability experts. Some people even argue that learning disability does not exist. The disagreements are for both scientific and philosophical reasons.

NOTE: The trainer may wish to see Hammill, 1990, in the Trainer's Supplement, Session One, for more information (see pages 55-65).

Explain that for our purposes, the exact definition and prevalence of learning disabilities does not matter. How we define a disability is important, however, because it determines the strategies and tools we will employ in working with these individuals.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

Ask the participants for an example of how the definition of a problem determines an outcome. (If there are none, or if the response is not useful, you may want to pose the following: If an individual's problem is money, what would be the strategy for solving that problem? This is a very broad problem. Now cite more narrow problems: not being able to save money, not earning enough money. The strategies for solving these problems would be different.)

NOTE: Remind participants again that students should not be defined in terms of their disability. Students must be viewed as a whole person.

H-9, T-E

A working definition. Direct participants' attention to H-9. This handout provides a working definition of learning disabilities that comes closest to representing a consensus. It illustrates the five components of a learning disability that can be found in most definitions.

Give participants a few minutes to read and reflect upon the definition on the top half of the page. Project T-E on overhead projector.

Guide participants through the definition by underlining key words and phrases with a transparency pen.

NOTE: Page 66 of the Trainer Supplement contains an example of which portions of the definition to highlight.

Direct participants' attention to the bottom half of the handout. Explain that while experts may not agree on what a learning disability is, there are areas of consensus that can be useful in planning instruction for students who may have a learning disability. Briefly discuss each component and its implications for instruction.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****C. Components of the Definition and Instructional Implications**

NOTE: This section provides a good deal of background information for the trainer. Since it is important for the training to be as participatory as possible, the trainer should make the presentation as interactive as possible and should use discretion in determining whether to go over the components in detail.

- *Component 1* focuses on the wide variety of problems that are encompassed by the term learning disability. Thus, no one instructional method will meet the needs of *all* students with learning disabilities. Teachers need to employ a range of tools and strategies that can be matched to students' needs. Ask the participants for examples. If none are given, or if they are inappropriate, cite the phonetic approach to reading as an example. While this works for many students with learning disabilities, it does not work for all students (Bingman, 1989).
- *Component 2* focuses on neurological implications. It assumes a "glitch" in how the brain inputs, processes and interprets, and communicates information. Some participants may focus on this individual "deficit" to the exclusion of other factors. In order to address this danger, remind the teachers of two things: (1) learner strengths can be used to help students accommodate for learning difficulties; and (2) teachers can modify their approaches to more effectively teach students with learning disabilities. To involve the teachers, ask them for an example of such accommodation. (An example of this might be the student with a visual perception problem who is asked to learn geography by drawing a map instead of learning through reading or viewing videos.)

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

- *Component 3* focuses on the persistence of learning disabilities into adulthood. Learning disabilities are not discrete, isolated characteristics but are patterns of difficulties that persist over time. But while they persist over time they are "expressed differently in different developmental periods and . . . adults with learning problems should not be viewed in the same way as simply grown-up learning disabled children" (Polloway, et al., 1984).

Adult educators should be aware of family, community, and work-related role-demands and competencies that adults bring with them to the classroom. When planning for instruction, educators should incorporate an understanding of how literacy and learning disabilities relate to the students' goals and strengths as well as to the demands that they face at home, at work, and in the community. (To involve teachers, ask them for examples of a job-related strength or demand; e.g., ability to handle several tasks at once; ability to communicate effectively with co-workers; ability to learn a new skill quickly.)

- *Components 4 and 5* focus on the severity of learning disabilities and the fact that they can occur in any population. There are often negative stereotypes of adults who are considered to have learning disabilities. These individuals are often seen as needing specialized or "different" instruction from other adults and as having limited ability to learn. This perception prevents teachers from looking beyond the disabilities to student strengths.
- *Component 6* focuses on the impact of learning disabilities on adult life. While teachers focus on cognitive issues, adults with learning difficulties often identify social problems as their major problem. At the same time, many adults have used their strengths to help them accommodate learning difficulties. Give examples of some accommodations (e.g., a person who has trouble with correct syntax when writing, but little trouble when speaking, could speak into

MATERIALSACTIVITIESTIMES

a tape recorder and transcribe his or her thoughts; a creative storyteller who has trouble with spelling or handwriting could use a word processor with a spell check feature) and discuss how teachers can support students and help them develop accommodations.

D. What Learning Disability Is *Not*

H-9, T-F

Definitions exclude as well as include people. The trainer should point to what is excluded from the definition in H-9. Display T-F.

1. *It is not retardation.* People with learning disabilities are sometimes inappropriately called, "dumb," "slow learners," or "retarded." Ask the group if there are any other terms they have heard (e.g., "good with their hands," "daydreamer," "discipline problem").
2. *It is not due to other disabilities.* Ask for examples. If none are given, or if those given are inappropriate, cite the examples of severe visual impairment or mental illness. Glasses may correct a visual impairment; emotional problems may compound — or be created or compounded by — learning disabilities that frustrate individuals or interfere with the way in which they process information.
3. *It is not due to cultural or linguistic differences.* Ask for examples. If none are given, or if they are inappropriate, note that differences in communication styles and the responses to culturally appropriate approaches may be confused with learning disabilities.

NOTE: You should now be approximately one hour and 15 minutes into the workshop.

B R E A K

15 min.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation****35 min.**

Although it is important to recognize and understand learning difficulties and disabilities that can be linked to individual needs, we cannot stop there. Differences and disabilities do not have to be debilitating. They only become so when one of the following elements is present: (1) the environment (e.g., a program or school) only addresses the needs of some individuals (e.g., visual learners), or (2) these individuals are unable to use their strengths to overcome the obstacles that they face (say in a program that is not built around the needs of adult learners). This part of the session will provide a base for understanding the problems created when individuals and programs (or schools) are unable to respond to the challenge posed by learning differences and learning disabilities. We will use everyday examples to help teachers explore the implications of what some call "disabling help" and others call the "social construction of disability."

A. Moving from Differences to Disabilities

The purpose of this section is to illustrate how a simple difference can lead to dire consequences. (If the example of how teachers saw left-handedness as a disability was used earlier, remind participants of that discussion.) Ask how many participants are left-handed. Point out that mortality statistics show that on average, left-handed individuals die younger than those who are right-handed. The trainer can ask the group why, and, after one or two responses, suggest that most theorists attribute it to the fact that left-handed individuals have to use tools and equipment that are designed, often unconsciously, for right-handed individuals.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****B. Moving from Disability to Accommodation**

The purpose of this section is to provide a useful illustration of how an environmental adaptation — an accommodation — can minimize the impact of a significant disability. Ask participants to scan the handout on “Barriers” (H-10). After one minute, ask the group for examples of how environments can be modified to provide access.

NOTE: If it is necessary, the trainer can use the example of ramps and curb-cuts to show how these enable people who use wheel chairs (and others) to utilize the environment.

C. The Paradoxical Implications of Identification

Identification of a disability has ambiguous implications. On the one hand identification of disabilities may enable learners and teachers to accommodate individual differences. On the other hand, identification (particularly, if inappropriate) can reinforce barriers to learning and label individuals. The trainer should distinguish between:

- (1) *The appropriate identification of a disability that can be accommodated and that enables learners and teachers to raise expectations is preferable to pejorative labels such as retarded, slow learner, lazy, and “only good with their hands.”*

To illustrate an aspect of this, ask the group for an example of how *negative labels* hurt people. If none come out, or the responses are insufficient, inform participants how, when interviewed, adults with learning disabilities talk about spending their life “managing humiliation.” (For example, see monograph, Osher & Webb, 1993.)

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

- (2) *An inaccurately applied label that does not improve results and leads teachers and tutors to see the learner (and not their approach) as the sole source of the problem or to reduce expectations.*

To illustrate an aspect of this, ask the participants for an example of how ignoring teaching-related problems can prevent teachers from adjusting their teaching to accommodate learning *differences*. For example, a teacher who mistakenly perceives a particularly nonverbal ESL student as not being fluent in any language may not provide that student with the experience and instruction that might focus on areas of strengths and help the student progress.

D. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

H-11, H-12

To enable the teachers to explore one of the implications of labels, the trainer should introduce the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy — how teacher and student expectations affect learner outcomes.

As an illustration of this, direct participants' attention to H-11 and H-12, which are samples of two letters summarizing the results of diagnostic tests on two adults with learning disabilities. Ask participants to take a few moments to read both letters and, while they are reading, to think about what message each letter gives them (if they were the learner *and* if they were the teacher). Explain that the letter in H-12 is not a worse-case scenario, but can be problematic in terms of its tone. H-11 seems to focus more on the learner's strengths and is easier to understand. Generate discussion on the implications of these two different approaches.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

NOTE: These two letters are provided to suggest two contrasting approaches. Some participants may be unfamiliar with such reports. If their unfamiliarity presents a problem, you might ask them for examples from their own experiences (e.g., discussions among teachers).

E. Visualizing Appropriate Identification

Because all students — even some of those who were labeled as learning disabled in public schools — are not learning disabled, and because some students who are learning disabled have not been identified, it is useful to visualize the range of students teachers will encounter in their work. We will end this section by providing a conceptual framework that participants can turn to throughout the workshop sessions for a visual reference.

H-13, T-G

Direct participants to H-13 and display T-G, showing the dilemma of those learners who do and do not have learning disabilities, and of those learners who are and are not identified.

NOTE: This matrix is a simple graphic that the trainer could point to periodically throughout the workshop to help teachers think about the different kinds of learners they are likely to work with, the impact of labels, and the implications of these differences.

Note that after the workshop, teachers can use this graphic as a means for remembering that: (1) all learning differences are not learning disabilities; (2) some learners who were labeled as having learning disabilities may have been inappropriately labeled; and (3) some of their students who have not been identified may have a learning disability.

NOTE: You should now be approximately 2 hours into the workshop.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person**

30 min.

People are more than their disabilities or any other single differentiating characteristic; hence the desire of most people with disabilities to be referred to as a person "with a disability" as opposed to "a disabled person."

H-14a-b

Direct participants' attention to H-14-a, a scenario of an adult learner named Karen W., and H-14-b, Scenario Focus Questions. Remind participants that adult learners have a variety of roles and responsibilities that help define them as individuals; the possible learning difficulty or disability does not define the person.

T-H
(multiple
copies)

Ask participants to break into their small groups, reading the scenario individually and then working together to respond to the focus questions. Direct each group to select a recorder/reporter to write responses on T-H and report back to the whole group. Inform groups that they have 15 minutes for this activity. Circulate among the groups to monitor their progress and answer questions. When five of the 15 minutes are left, announce the time remaining to the groups.

NOTE: The scenario on Karen W. provides a composite of information on one individual. If you would like to use additional scenarios or if you would like a profile of someone more relevant to your needs, you may choose to write your own scenario or you may choose from the alternative ESL scenario on Alicia S. in the Trainer Supplements, page 67. A real-life case study, written by and about an adult education student named Ron White, is also available in the Trainer Supplements, pages 68-69. Scenario Focus Questions may be used for these examples, as well.

Have each group spokesperson project T-H on the overhead projector while explaining the group's findings.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

NOTE: The amount of time allowed for these presentations will depend on the total number of groups.

H-15

To prepare participants to start thinking about their students as whole people, ask them to take a minute and write down on H-15, Adult Roles, the set of roles that they and their students, as adults, play outside of the classroom and the types of competencies that their learners bring with them (e.g., parent, family member, worker, learner, citizen). After a minute, ask for examples. If none are provided (or if they are insufficient or inappropriate) provide examples from the world of work, family, and community (e.g., mother of two children, foreman, little league coach, church volunteer). Then observe that teachers usually see only one role — learner. End this point by adding that even as learners, adults may not show their best face in a school-like environment. Their culture may be different from the school's and/or teacher's culture. Also, a school may resurrect past frustrations that most of our students — particularly those with learning difficulties — faced before. Ask the participants for examples of this, noting that uncomfortable settings may make it hard for learners to display their learning strengths.

End this discussion by suggesting that if teachers are going to be able to work with adults in an effective manner, they must understand what motivates the learners, what strengths the learners have, how they have compensated for their learning difficulties (or their inability to perform certain academic tasks), their support system, and the places where they will test out, refine, and apply the skills they develop.

VI. Interim Task Assignment**15 min.**

The emphasis of the interim assignment is upon the student and teacher as partners. The goal is for teachers to learn about the student's different strengths and roles outside the classroom. Conversations with the student should, in addition to teacher observations, serve as the

basis for determining student learning strengths, interests, and accommodation strategies. These learning strengths will form the basis for developing the instructional strategies that will be explored in Sessions Two and Three of the training packet.

H-16a-c, T-I

Direct participants' attention to the interim task assignment packet (H-16a-c) and display T-I. Review the instructions on the first page and make sure all participants know what is expected of them. Answer any questions.

NOTE: Remind participants that these are suggested questions. If a question is inappropriate, they should adjust in a manner that fits the learner's cultural and social context. Ask participants to read all parts of the interim task assignment packet carefully and thoroughly. To make sure that participants are equipped to proceed with the assignment, it is important that the trainer provide sufficient examples. Refer briefly to the scenario of Karen W. and model how you would interview her (H-14-a). To make this participatory, you might ask two volunteers to role play the interview.

In addition, ask participants to read R-2, a chapter from Sally Smith's (of the Lab School in Washington, D.C.) book, *Succeeding Against the Odds*. This will provide some useful background reading to prepare them for work they will be doing later in Session Two and Session Three.

NOTE: We have chosen the Smith book because it is practical and readable. Since it focuses on working both with children and adults with learning disabilities, participants should be asked to focus on the information that pertains to adult learners.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation		10 min.
H-17a-d	A. Session Evaluation	Ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form for Session One (H-17a-d). Be sure to allow sufficient time for participants to complete it. Then collect the form, analyze the results, and use them as a basis for planning Session Two.
	B. Thank participants for their time and effort. Remind them of Session Two and give time and place, if known.	

TRAINER NOTES

SESSION TWO

BEFORE SESSION TWO

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session Two of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send Notice of Session Two (H-18) to Session One participants only.** This notice should include a reminder that participants should bring their entire handout packets from Session One with them to Session Two, especially the Home Task. Remind them to complete the home task.
- ☐ **Review sign-in sheet from Session One to verify attendance.**
- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session Two (H-19 through H-28) and arrange them into packets.** Also duplicate a few extra sets of handouts for Session One (H-3 through H-17) for those participants who forget to bring theirs to Session Two.
- ☐ **Make extra copies of handout H-20.**
- ☐ **Prepare transparencies from all of the Transparency Masters provided for Session Two (T-J through T-N).** Make enough copies of T-L for one per group of participants.
- ☐ **Check equipment (VHS players and monitors, and overhead projector) to make sure it is working properly.** Check screen size and readability of print on screen.
- ☐ **Arrange for a place to hold Session Two; make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out session.**
- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments that will be available.**
- ☐ **Obtain name tags for participants.**
- ☐ **Read the Trainer's Notes for Session Two, pages 29-40. Review handouts H-19 through H-28 and transparencies T-J through T-N.**

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION TWO

<u>MATERIALS</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>TIMES</u>
	I. Introduction/Workshop Overview	30 min.
	A. Welcome Participants	5 min.
H-19*, T-J*	Welcome participants. They should be the same as those who attended Session One. However, if there are any newcomers to the group, have all participants (old and new) introduce themselves quickly one by one to the large group by stating their name, program, and the type of class they are currently teaching. Present the agenda for Session Two (H-19 and T-J). NOTE: Participants should form the same small groups of four to six people that they organized during Session One. They will continue to stay in these groups throughout Session Two. If there are new participants, include them in existing groups so that they can benefit from the experience of the returning participants.	
	B. Opening Exercise	25 min.
H-20	To open Session Two, distribute loose copies of H-20, "Person Search, Part 2". The process for conducting this activity is similar to the scavenger hunt they participated in at the beginning of Session One, but the items are more in-depth and tied more closely to issues that will be covered in the workshop. Give participants five to 10 minutes to complete the activity, again explaining that they must move around the room (if they can) to collect names on the appropriate line. To continue the theme (and give someone else a chance to win), you may also designate a prize to the person who collects the most signatures.	

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

The objective of this scavenger hunt is different from the one in Session One. Both activities are designed to help participants find out more about the whole person; however, the focus in Session Two is to rethink the activity to make it more learner-centered.

After a winner has been declared, ask participants to get into their small groups and brainstorm for 10 minutes to answer the following question:

This kind of activity works well for some people and not for others. What are some ways they would structure the activity differently to better incorporate their learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory) and personal context (e.g., don't like games, don't like having to mingle with people, aren't mobile enough to move around)?

NOTE: In doing this exercise, participants have three options: to keep the activity as it is, revise it, or choose an alternative activity. If the participants want to revise the activity but are unable to think of revisions, provide some examples. For example, they could flip a coin or draw numbers to decide what order to follow; they could conduct cooperative interviews in small groups; they could share in-depth with one or two individuals. Experience has shown that people generally like participating in a scavenger-hunt activity, but if the groups do not like this exercise, they may suggest an alternative.

After 10 minutes have elapsed, ask the groups to select a representative to report the group's findings. Each group should take no more than two minutes. Explain to participants that, unless the consensus is to do away with the scavenger hunt, there will be a similar activity in Session Three, but it will be reframed based on their recommendations during this exercise. If they elect not to conduct a scavenger hunt, an alternative activity will be conducted that reflects their input during the brainstorm activity.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****II. Review of Session One**

15 min.

NOTE: The purpose of this portion of the workshop is to review major points covered in Session One and to provide a warm-up activity leading into the discussion of Interim Task Assignment 1, H-16a-c.

H-21, T-K

Direct participants' attention to H-21. Have participants discuss the four questions with a partner. Tell the participants that they should feel free to refer to the workshop material from Session One as they answer the questions. Allow 10 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

Project T-K on the overhead projector. Facilitate a brief large-group discussion of H-21; using a transparency marker, briefly record responses under appropriate headings.

III. Review of Interim Task Assignment

35 min.

H-16a-c

A. Small Group Discussion of Interim Task

20 min.

Direct participants' attention to H-16a-c, their Interim Task Assignment packets. Participants should have completed this packet and brought it with them to Session Two. Have additional packets on hand for participants who have forgotten their packets.

H-22, T-L
(multiple
copies),
Transparency
Pens

Participants will now work in their small groups to share and discuss the results of their interim task assignments. Direct participants to H-22. Explain each step of the small group task and answer any questions. Clearly state that each group should develop a student profile. Distribute one copy of T-L and transparency pens to each group.

Inform the groups that you will be available to provide assistance while they are working. Circulate among the groups, listening to participants, sharing and offering assistance, as necessary. Monitor the progress of the groups, moving them along and encouraging them to fill out their transparencies for

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

the presentation to the large group. When 10 minutes remains in the time allotted, make an announcement to the group. This will keep participants on task.

B. Small Group Presentations

15 min.

Have one or two volunteers from each group present the "student profile" their group has selected to share. After each presentation, ask for comments and questions from the large group.

The small group presentations should provide the participants with examples of a variety of learning needs, strengths, and social-cultural contexts that are found among their students. Explain that these student profiles will be used during the remaining portion of the workshop to develop learner-centered plans of instruction.

NOTE: The amount of time you allot to each group's presentation will depend upon the total number of small groups.

NOTE: You should now be approximately one hour and 20 minutes into the workshop.

B R E A K

15 min.

IV. Planning for Learning

85 min.

A. Instructional Process

15 min.

H-23a-d,
T-Ma-d

Direct participants' attention to H-23a. The purpose of this handout is to provide participants with a blueprint for instructional planning and to highlight the importance of involving students in *all* phases of planning and monitoring instruction. Project T-M-a on overhead projector. This graph serves two functions: (1) it provides a simple dynamic model of the stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring; and (2) it will orient

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

participants to work they will be doing in Sessions Two and Three. Focus participants' attention to the top of the page. Explain that the whole process of learning begins and ends with the learner. Next point to the first box at the top of the page, "getting to know the student," and explain that the instructor first needs to have an understanding of the student's social-cultural context and to begin to establish rapport with the student before conducting a "needs assessment." Briefly examine bulleted items. Explain that the interim task assignment for Session One reflects a key component in any learner-centered needs assessment: learning about the student as a whole person and understanding the student's goals *and* resources. Participants will develop a needs assessment later in Session Two. Direct participants to the remaining three boxes: objectives, learning activities and student support, and monitoring. Briefly discuss each, moving clockwise around the transparency.

NOTE: Explain that the first box was covered in Session One and in the Interim Task Assignment. The items in the remaining four boxes will be highlighted in Sessions Two and Three. Session Two will concentrate on two boxes — needs assessment and objectives — whereas Session Three will focus on the learning activities and monitoring phases. In Session Three, participants will look at some methods, tools, and resources for working with students with learning difficulties.

H-23a-d

The next three handouts (H-23-b, H-23-c, H-23-d) present variations on the process described in H-23-a (T-M-a) that account for adults who may have learning difficulties or disabilities. In order to engage participants in visualizing these illustrations as you explain them, have them break into their small groups again. Each group will represent one box on the diagram; if needed, one group can represent the "student" at the top of the page. Illustrate the flow around the diagram by tossing a beach ball (or other lightweight ball) to each point in the circle. Literally and symbolically, in this case, the student starts the ball rolling in this process.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

Wherever the ball lands, it's still his or her ball. Have each group toss the ball clockwise around to the corresponding group as you describe each element in this cycle.

An alternative approach is to have each group stand and/or wave their arms (like a "wave" at a football game) as you describe each part of the process. Whichever method you choose, point out to participants that it represents use of multi-sensory (e.g., visual, tactile-kinesthetic) modalities.

T-M-b

Direct participants to each variation on the diagram as you project them on the overhead projector. Project T-M-b (H-23-b) and point to the addition of a stage called "targeting difficulties." Explain that during any one of the stages represented, either initially through a needs assessment or through monitoring of the instructional process, a teacher may determine that targeting strengths and needs is necessary. With transparency pen, trace the arrow from the "monitoring" box back to the "targeting" phase in the right hand corner of the transparency (H-23-b, T-M-b). Have groups toss the ball around (or form a wave) again as you show the new circuit, with the trainer standing in as the "targeting" phase.

NOTE: Explain that targeting difficulties will be covered during Session Three.

H-23-c,
T-M-c

For the third handout and transparency (H-23-c and T-M-c), note the addition of a stage that incorporates the use of external resources (e.g., vocational rehabilitation). Explain that a problematic assessment or persistent difficulties even after you have adapted instruction in a variety of ways (point to the "monitoring" box), a teacher may seek an outside agency for a formal evaluation or diagnosis.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

H-23-d,
T-M-d

The final transparency of this series (H-23-d, T-M-d) shows the complete process, including the addition of four areas of the students' lives that are key to a learner-centered approach: classroom, home, work, and community. Stress the importance of these areas in learner-centered instruction. Note that in addition to learning activities, a student support system is important, one that could include student support groups, counseling, child care, and transportation. Instruction should reflect the strengths that adults demonstrate as well as the needs that they have in the different areas of their lives that fall outside the classroom. Not only do needs in some or all of these areas motivate learning, but these areas will be the place where students test out, use, and refine their learning.

Ask the participants to get into their small groups to discuss their students' different social contexts — community, work, and home. If they're having difficulty thinking of examples, ask them to think back to Karen W. from Session One (H-14-a) and to the Adult Roles (H-15) they noted for her. Have participants provide an example or two of how they or their students test out and use their learning.

B. Video Demonstration

25 min.

Continuously observing and discussing with students what works and what doesn't are important ways that students and teachers together can discover ways in which students can learn.

NOTE: This portion of the workshop focuses on how teachers can work with students to begin to determine student learning strengths, learning preferences, barriers to learning, and accommodation strategies. This information will form the basis for developing a student-centered plan of instruction.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****H-24**

Inform participants that the video they are about to see features interviews with two adults who have learning disabilities. Before showing the video, ask participants to watch for indicators of student learning style preference, goals, strengths, barriers to learning, and instructional and support needs. Discuss H-24, "Video Focus Chart" and answer any questions. H-24 may be used for taking notes on the video. Inform participants that they have 20 minutes for this activity.

T-N

Show the video through without stopping. In small groups, have participants discuss the video and fill out H-24. Project T-N onto the overhead projector. Have volunteers discuss what their group wrote for H-24 and record responses on T-N. Facilitate a group discussion of the patterns they see emerging and what the implications for instruction might be. Emphasize that participants should look for patterns that indicate learning strength and possible barriers to learning. Encourage participants to be aware of information that is implied or missing. What information would they need to complete the picture, assess the student's needs, and work more effectively with the student? How might this information be obtained?

NOTE: Again, remind participants that three three-hour sessions are insufficient to prepare them to identify a person as learning disabled. Educators should take care not to label students as learning disabled.

NOTE: The purpose for showing the video is to provide additional information about what it is like to have a learning difficulty or disability, to provide a common base to work from for the upcoming needs assessment exercise, and for the two individuals highlighted in the video to serve as reference points for the trainer and participants.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****C. Needs Assessment****45 min.**

Needs assessments can be built around teacher and program needs (what might be called an organization-based needs assessment) or they can be built around the needs of adult learners (what might be called a consumer-based needs assessment). The goal of this section of the workshop is to ready participants to develop and participate in a consumer-oriented, learner-based needs assessment.

Begin this section by observing that, like business, education and social service providers are starting to develop a customer orientation — involving consumers (learners) and producers (teachers) in the planning process. The goal of this process in business is *customization* — tailoring products and services to meet the needs of customers and involving users to avoid unworkable design problems. Ask participants if they have had any experience with such approaches. If not, provide an example of consumer involvement (e.g., focus groups and one-on-one interviews to get ideas for product development; customer satisfaction surveys by credit card companies — referred to in the business world as “customer listening”). Inform participants that the needs assessment they will conduct is learner-centered and aims at customizing approaches to address learner needs and improve learning outcomes.

H-25a-c,
T-M-a

Refer participants back to the transparency (T-M-a), the first flow chart on the instructional process. Inform participants that since their students are not present, the interview that they conducted for the first interim task — as well as the information they compiled in the student profile and their knowledge of their student — will provide the base for the needs assessment. (If any participants are new, they should select a student whom they know a good deal about or they may choose one of the learners from the video.) Direct their attention to H-25a-c. Inform participants that H-25a-b is a format that they can choose to use or modify in their actual work and that H-25-c is an adaptation

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

of H-25a-b for use in the workshop. Ask the participants to take a minute to review H-25a-b. Respond to any questions. Have the participants take 10 minutes to fill out H-25-c, with the trainer making himself or herself available for assistance.

After the 10 minutes have elapsed, the trainer should ask the participants to work in their small groups for 15 minutes. Now each participant should present a brief synthesis of his or her needs assessment. After each participant has presented, the group should select one assessment to present to the entire workshop that particularly reflects a student-centered approach. (The trainer should inform participants when 10 minutes are up).

The trainer should conclude this exercise by having a representative from each group present his or her group's example, suggesting how this assessment embodies customization to address the particular strengths, needs, and goals of an adult learner. If time permits, the trainer should facilitate a discussion on how to put into practice this approach to needs assessment.

Explain to participants that if they have time during the next interim task, they may conduct a needs assessment with their student using the model they worked from today.

The purposes of this exercise are threefold:

- (1) It may improve the needs assessment.
- (2) It underscores and helps participants internalize the fact that teachers and students have different perspectives.
- (3) It will encourage participants to reflect on needs assessments from a learner-centered perspective.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****V. Interim Task Assignment**

10 min.

H-26a-c,
H-27a-g

Direct participants' attention to the Interim Task Assignment packet for Session Two, H-26a-c, and H-27a-g, a "Tool Kit" of instructional strategies. Go over the instructions on the first page (H-26-a) and make sure all participants know what is expected of them. Answer any questions. Remind participants that they will need to bring materials from Sessions One and Two with them to Session Three.

NOTE: Give the following cautions to participants:

- One month is a short period of time to expect to see visible changes, and the adaptive strategies participants try out with their students may not bear fruit in this brief period.
- There are no quick fixes when you are dealing with adults with learning difficulties or learning disabilities. Remember that some learning problems are more difficult to deal with than others and that teachers may need to find out more about the student in order to work with him or her effectively.

H-27a-g, R-2*,
R-3

In addition to the "Tool Kit" (H-27) in their Interim Task Assignment packet, ask participants to read R-3, Mary Beth Bingman's paper, *Learning Differently: Meeting the Needs of Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Remind them that they may also want to reread R-2, the chapter from Sally Smith's book, *Succeeding Against the Odds*. Explain that these readings, along with the Tool Kit, will provide some general background information that may help participants in working with their students and completing their interim task.

By this time in the workshop, participants have had two experiences designed to enhance their understanding of students who learn differently:

* "R" = "Supplementary Reading"

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

- (1) Interim Task 1 focused on the student as a whole person. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the strengths that adults demonstrate as well as the different needs they have that fall outside the classroom.
- (2) The needs assessment focused on learner-centered approaches to prioritizing goals and general needs.

By now participants should be ready to start modifying their approach to teaching in a reflective and learner-centered manner. Interim Task 2 will provide an opportunity to practice adaptive instructional strategies. Session Three will provide participants with an opportunity to obtain feedback and to reflect on those strategies.

VI. Evaluation and Wrap-Up**5 min.****H-28a-d****A. Session Evaluation**

Ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form for Session Two (H-28a-d). Be sure to allow sufficient time for participants to complete it. Then collect the form, analyze the results, and use them as a basis for planning Session Three.

- B. Thank participants for their time and effort. Remind them of Session Three and give time and place, if known.

TRAINER NOTES
SESSION THREE

BEFORE SESSION THREE

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session Three of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send Notice of Session Three (H-29)** to Session One and Two participants only. This notice should include a reminder that participants should bring their entire handout packets from Session Two with them to Session Three, especially the Interim Task Assignment. Remind them to complete the assignment.
- ☐ **Review sign-in sheet from Session Two** to verify attendance.
- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session Three (H-30 through H-41)** and arrange them into packets. Also duplicate a few extra sets of handouts for Session One (H-3 through H-17) and Session Two (H-19 through H-27) for those participants who forget to bring theirs to Session Three.
- ☐ **Make extra copies of handout H-31.**
- ☐ **Prepare transparencies** from all of the Transparency Masters provided for Session Three (T-O through T-V).
- ☐ **Check equipment** (VHS players and monitors, and overhead projector) to make sure it is working properly. Check screen size and readability of print on screen.
- ☐ **Arrange for a place to hold Session Three;** make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out sessions.
- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments** that will be available.
- ☐ **Obtain name tags** for participants.
- ☐ **Read the Trainer's Notes for Session Three, pages 42-53. Review handouts H-30 through H-40, transparencies T-O through T-V, and Trainer Supplement pages 70-71.**

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION THREE

MATERIALS

ACTIVITIES

TIMES

I. Introduction/Workshop Overview

15 min.

A. Welcome Participants

Welcome participants. There should not be any newcomers (if they missed Sessions One and Two, they will be too far behind to catch up in this workshop).

H-30*, T-O*

Direct participants' attention to H-30 and display T-O. Go over the agenda and the session objectives. Explain that this is the third and final session in this workshop series. Answer any questions.

Have participants form small groups of four to six based on their areas of teaching (e.g., ESL, ABE). Explain that participants will collaborate on planning for learning and refining instructional strategies in Session Three. (Do not separate teachers from tutors.) Suggest that the groups they form in Session Three can serve as a model or a base for support groups they may form in their individual programs.

NOTE: Once they have formed their small groups, ask participants to choose a partner (probably the person next to them) whom they will work with. Pairs should switch off roles from one activity to the next (e.g., the person playing a student should play a teacher in the next activity). There may be an uneven number of participants so that one person cannot be paired. When that is the case, participants may form a triad. In a triad, two people should act as students.

B. Activity: Person Search Revisited

H-31

As was the case for Sessions One and Two, a scavenger hunt will be conducted to open up Session Three. The manner in which the scavenger hunt will be conducted will vary depending on the recommendations made by participants when they

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

processed the scavenger hunt activity in Session Two and suggested ways of accommodating their learning differences. Distribute loose copies of the Person Search (H-31). Give participants 10 minutes to complete the activity.

NOTE: The items on this new list have been adapted to tie in with the themes of Session Three.

Once participants have completed the activity, briefly explain the reasoning behind the questions that were included (e.g., they tied in with the themes to be covered in Session Three: reflective practice, accessing resources, collaboration, monitoring and adapting instructional strategies). Did participants conduct this exercise differently from the scavenger hunts in Sessions One and Two? If they chose to modify the format used in Session One and Session Two, how did their modifications affect the way they approached the activity this time? Ask participants for feedback on the processing of the three activities.

II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration 20 min.

H-32, H-33,
H-34

The purpose of this section is to help participants understand the processes involved in reflectively modifying their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities. The section builds upon three interrelated concepts: (1) the reflective practitioner, (2) the teacher as researcher, and (3) collaborative research. These concepts are briefly described at the top of H-32, H-33, and H-34, and are discussed more extensively in the trainer supplement on page 71.

A. The Reflective Practitioner

H-32,
Blank
Transparency

Direct participants' attention to H-32, which provides a short description of reflective practice. Ask participants to take five minutes to read the description of reflective practice and to discuss with a partner the question at the bottom of H-32. State that you will be available to answer questions.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants to suggest characteristics of reflective practice. Write their responses down on a blank transparency. Synthesize their responses by suggesting that reflective practitioners demonstrate the ability to: evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor the use of appropriate tools.

B. The Teacher as Researcher**H-33**

Direct participants' attention to H-33, which provides a short description of action research. Ask participants to read the description of the terms and to discuss the question at the bottom of the page. When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants for examples of how they acted as researchers when as teachers and tutors, they collected, assessed, and acted on data about the outcomes of their teaching.

C. Collaborative Research**H-34**

Direct participants' attention to H-34, which provides a short description of collaborative research. Ask participants to read the description and to discuss with their partner the question at the bottom of the page. When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants to meet in their small groups for five minutes to briefly explore ways that they can work with students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their teaching.

NOTE: Indicate to participants that the remainder of Session Three models these three components of reflective practice in three ways: (1) They will be working in teams (one person takes on the learner role and the other acts as the teacher); (2) They will be working with people with similar ideas; and (3) They will continue to explore how to keep trying out, adapting, and monitoring strategies for learners with learning difficulties.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

H-23a-d.
T-Ma-d

NOTE: At various points during the discussion in Session Three, the trainer may find it necessary to refer back to the flow charts (H-23a-d) introduced in Session Two. Have transparencies (T-Ma-d) on hand to reorient participants to the concepts. Another option would be to draw the diagrams on the flip chart and tape the pages to the wall.

III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task Assignment 35 min.

H-26a-b

Direct Participants' attention to H-26a-b, their interim task assignment packets from Session Two. Participants should have completed this packet and brought it with them to Session Three. Have additional packets on hand for participants who have forgotten their packets.

Explain that the purpose of Interim Task Assignment 2 was to get participants started in developing strategies for working with students who have learning difficulties. Session Three builds on that work by targeting student needs, adapting teaching, and developing strategies for monitoring the outcomes of their adapted teaching.

Reiterate that one month does not provide sufficient time for them to achieve their goals. Participants and their students will need to monitor their efforts on an ongoing basis — beyond the life of this workshop series.

H-26-b, H-35,
T-P,
Transparency
Pens

Participants will now work in their small groups (ESL or ABE teachers and volunteer instructors) to share and discuss the results of their interim task assignments. Direct participants' attention to H-35. Explain each step of the small group task and answer any questions. Distribute one copy of the Interim Task Assignment Planning Guide (H-26-b in Session Two handouts) and transparency pens to each group. Clearly state that participants should share information they recorded on their planning guide and choose one case to present before the large group. Indicate to participants that this exercise contains elements of collaborative inquiry.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

Inform the groups that you will be available to provide assistance while they are working. Circulate among the groups, listening to the participants' sharing; offer assistance as necessary. Monitor the progress of the groups, moving them along and encouraging them to fill out their transparencies for the presentation to the large group.

NOTE: Allow 25 minutes for this activity. When 10 minutes remain in the time allotted, make an announcement to the groups to keep the participants on task. Each group representative will have approximately two minutes to present findings from the group, depending on the total number of small groups.

B R E A K

15 min.

IV. Planning for Learning

40 min.

A. Targeting Areas of Need

5 min.

The interim task involved a preliminary effort at adapting instruction. We will now build on work you have done to simulate and model some of the steps necessary to adapt teaching in a reflective, collaborative, and systematic manner. The model involves: (1) establishing a working relationship with the learner as a whole person (as exemplified in Interim Task 1); (2) conducting a learner-centered needs assessment (explored in Session Two); (3) targeting needs and strengths (to be done below); (4) planning (to be done below); (5) implementing the plan (initiated during the second interim task); (6) monitoring and evaluating efforts; and (7) refining approaches if necessary.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

NOTE FOR ESL INSTRUCTORS: Difficulties that are connected with mastering a new language as an adult can be confused with learning difficulties. Conversely, learning difficulties may be masked by what seems to be the simple problem of learning a new language. Two steps can be taken to avoid confounding a learning problem and an ESL-related problem: (1) evaluate needs in the learner's native language; and (2) ask the learner questions to find out whether or not he or she experiences the same problem in settings where the individual uses his or her native language.

Once teachers and tutors have done a needs assessment, they may find it useful to work with students to target areas of strength and needs. Suggest to participants the sources of information they can use for targeting:

- Student self-reporting
- Teacher observations
- Developing an observational tool
- Adapting a screening tool (e.g., Smith, Bingman)
- Employing a screening tool (but *only* after one has been trained on using that tool)
- An evaluation by a learning disabilities specialist

H-36a-b, T-Q,
T-R

Targeting can be broad or specific. Examples of broad-based targeting may be to look at learning styles in the most general areas of strength and difficulty (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, organizational, social, and emotional). More specific targeting may break down these broad areas into narrower ones. Draw participants' attention to H-36a-b (T-Q, T-R), which help do this by looking at both: (1) the area of difficulty (H-36-a), and (2) the relationship of the area of difficulty to the input, integration, and output of information (H-36-b). For example, in locating difficulties it may be useful to distinguish between a problem in perceiving visual information (input),

MATERIALS

ACTIVITIES

TIMES

retrieving and processing visual information (integration or processing), and communicating visual information (output).

B. Developing a Learning Plan

35 min.

Once teachers and tutors (ideally with students) have targeted needs and strengths, they can develop learning objectives which they can implement in their teaching.

H-37, T-S

Explain that participants will work in pairs to develop a lesson plan based on the information they collected on their students for the Interim Task Assignments. Direct participants' attention to H-37, Planning for Learning Tool; display T-S. Explain each of the categories and go over the example provided in the first row. Provide additional examples as needed.

H-38, T-T

Begin by clarifying the distinction between *goals* and *objectives*. An objective is a subgoal, a step towards a goal; the goal is broader; it is the "prize" that the teacher and learner should always keep one eye on. To illustrate this distinction between goals and objectives, display T-T (H-38), which provides a simple graphic to show the process of working toward a goal.

Ask participants to take 10 minutes to begin to fill in the chart individually for the student they chose for the interim task. Have them get into their pairs to discuss one student and work on their lesson plan, filling in the chart more completely. They can flip a coin (or choose some other method) to decide whose student they will work on in refining their learning plan. Explain the importance of collaboration and the blending of perspectives in completing this activity.

MATERIALS

ACTIVITIES

TIMES

Direct participants to play out teacher-student roles as they develop the learning plan. In this student-teacher collaborative activity, what input can/should the student provide to make this a workable plan? One person in the pair should keep the student's perspective in mind. How can the teacher incorporate learner needs and strengths in developing this plan? The person playing the teacher should adopt the teacher's perspective.

Participants will have 15 minutes to develop and discuss their learning plan. Explain that they will further discuss and report their findings in small groups during the next activity on monitoring instruction.

You should now be approximatey two hours into the workshop.

V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy

25 min.

Monitoring is critical to making sure that: (a) plans are being implemented appropriately and (b) that implementation is achieving the intended objectives. Monitoring is a form of collaborative research that should be designed during the planning phase. This section of the workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to briefly design, examine, and reflect on monitoring strategies.

H-39, T-U

Participants should work in the same pairs to explore monitoring strategies that can be used to assess the plan they just developed. Direct their attention to H-39, "From Needs Assessment to Monitoring to Goals" which locates the development of a monitoring plan and monitoring within the overall context of moving from needs assessments to goals (refer to H-38). Display T-U and briefly explain each box in the illustration. The trainer should explain that this exercise reflects that part of the planning process (box) that involves this development of a monitoring strategy. (This part is highlighted in the box.) They should take 10 minutes

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

for this part and explore monitoring strategies from both the perspective of the teacher and the perspective of the learner.

After the 10 minutes have elapsed, ask the participants to move into their groups, where each pair should report on the plan and monitoring strategy that they developed. After group members make suggestions for improvement, the group should select a plan and monitoring strategy to report back to the entire group.

One representative from each small group reports out to the large group. After each presentation, ask for comments and questions from the large group. The amount of time allotted to each group's presentation will depend upon the total number of small groups.

You may opt to take an optional short break at this point.

VI. Accessing and Using Resources

15 min.

A. Potential Resources

Flip Chart,
Blank
Transparency

Ask participants to take a couple of minutes to read H-40 and to think about resources that are available in their community for adults with learning disabilities. Have participants meet in their groups to brainstorm for 10 minutes regarding what resources are available in their community and how they and their students can access them.

NOTE: The purpose of this group work is twofold: (1) to enable participants to examine H-40, and (2) to enable participants to explore ways of accessing resources. The trainer should make her/himself available to assist participants in this exercise.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES****VII. How Do You Make It Happen?**

10 min.

NOTE: This section is aimed at synthesizing the three sessions in a manner that enables participants to reflect on how to apply key concepts in the day-to-day realities of their work. Doing this requires:

- Having participants reflect upon and identify the key lessons from the three sessions;
- Enabling participants to reflect on how they can apply these lessons in their own work; and
- Summarizing salient themes that will be of use to all participants.

Synthesis also requires acknowledging the different situations in which participants work. Adult educators work in a variety of settings and situations. Some work in states and organizations that have started to address the needs of students with moderate and serious learning difficulties. Others work in states and organizations that are still in the process of developing an awareness of the issues surrounding adults with moderate and serious learning difficulties. Some work in organizations that make it easy to meet with students or to plan or customize curriculum or bring in an outside expert. Others are less fortunately situated.

Begin this section by acknowledging the different realities that participants face. After briefly responding to these realities, ask each group to take five to 10 minutes to discuss the most important lessons of the three sessions and how they can be adapted to their own teaching environments. Circulate among the groups and listen to their comments. When the 10 minutes are up, convene the entire group and tell them that you want to note some areas that they may or may not have discussed in their group.

MATERIALS

ACTIVITIES

TIMES

Remind participants of the following four principles:

- (1) Learner-centered approaches build upon the learner's knowledge and goals: the larger the group, the more important it is to involve the learner in validating plans and monitoring results. While this is best done interactively, it can also be done in writing, by tape, or in some other format.
- (2) The student brings resources to the classroom — hence the importance of a strengths model. Working from this model makes it easier in large groups to develop accommodations that will facilitate learning.
- (3) Students can provide support for one another that:
 - facilitates learning
 - sustains motivation
 - sustains self-advocacy
 - provides a base for continuing support networks. Building teaching around collaborative learning creates time to meet with individuals or groups of students.
- (4) You are not alone. As reflective practitioners, you can work with students and colleagues to develop, adapt, and evaluate approaches to teaching.

VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes

10 min.

T-V

Using transparency T-V, ask participants to recall the workshop activities of all three sessions and identify either:

- Ways the activities correspond to any of the principles asserted about working with adults with learning difficulties.
- Ways the activities could have been changed or improved.

Explain to participants that this workshop has attempted to model the processes it teaches, in particular a learner-centered approach to working with adults with learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

MATERIALS**ACTIVITIES****TIMES**

NOTE: The purpose of the "reflection" is not for evaluation of the workshop but rather to bring to a conscious level the processes that are modeled in this workshop series. If time is very short, the trainer may elect to present this information, but it is more effective if participants recall the processes.

IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

5 min.

H-41a-d

Thank participants for their time and effort. Distribute Evaluation Form for Session Three (H-41a-d) and ask them to complete the form. If time permits, recall workshop objectives and determine how workshop activities have met those objectives.

TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

SESSION ONE

ADULTS FIRST AND LAST

MOTIVATION GOALS ATTITUDE ABILITY TO LEARN SOCIAL CONTEXT CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	<i>Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?</i> • self (self-esteem) • self-empowerment • social networks • personal goals • money • life events • children • teacher/mentor (Implications for instruction: acknowledge the learner's social context and maximize adult learner involvement in all dimensions of the adult learning process)
	<i>What are some educational goals adults have?</i> • get job or better job • help children learn • get GED or other certificates • help others • career change • earn more money • independence • feel good about self (Implications for instruction: adults know why they are in school and tend to seek immediate application of things they learn)
	<i>What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?</i> • fear of failure • lack of confidence • frustration • depends upon past experience (Implications for instruction: adults need to be shown that they are progressing and that they can learn despite fear of failure or previous negative experiences)
	<i>What strengths do adults bring to learning?</i> • self-discipline • depends upon attitude and motivation • better than child's ability because of experiences • life experience to draw upon • more mature • anxious to learn (Implications for instruction: adults have an extensive reservoir of experiences and skills that they can draw upon)
	<i>What social and cultural factors strongly affect learning?</i> • time consideration • feel education must come quickly, no time to waste • expect to be treated like adults • culture • roles • very busy lives • social status (Implications for instruction: education must embrace and connect with the learner's life outside the classroom)
	<i>What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?</i> • collaborative learning • peer support • teacher as facilitator • self-directed learning • need feedback • expect to be treated like adults (Implications for instruction: education must provide a variety of approaches and settings for adults to choose from to meet their needs)

Editor's Comment:

One of the most important issues in the field today relates to the definition of learning disabilities. Professionals and parents have discussed and debated this subject since 1962. In the following article, Dr. Donald Hammill observes that much progress has been made over the years in defining learning disabilities. He concludes that of the currently available definitions, the one developed by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities is the most precise and acceptable. Readers' comments on this critical issue, as "Letters to the Editor" or "Forum" articles, are encouraged and will be printed as space permits. —JLW

On Defining Learning Disabilities: An Emerging Consensus

Donald D. Hammill

This article reviews the efforts made since 1962 to define learning disabilities, provides readers with a clear picture of the current status of such definitions, and recommends that a consensus form around the definition proposed by the NJCLD.

Few topics in the field of learning disabilities have evoked as much interest or controversy as have those relating to the definition of the condition. Beginning in 1962 with Samuel Kirk's first effort to define the term, and continuing to the present, professionals, parents, and governmental agents have tried to develop a valid and widely acceptable definition. This article reviews these efforts, provides readers with a clear picture of the current status of learning disabilities definitions, and recommends that a consensus form around the definition proposed by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD).

First, the distinction must be made between conceptual and operational definitions of learning disabilities. A conceptual definition is a statement that describes learning disabilities theoretically. As such, it is a first step toward the development of an operational definition that can be used in everyday situations to identify people who have learning disabilities. Conceptual definitions are important because one must have a clear idea of what learning disabilities are before one can identify them in individ-

uals. This paper focuses exclusively on conceptual definitions of learning disabilities.

The article has six parts. The first part explains why definitions are important. The second part describes the procedures used to identify the various definitions that are or have been influential in the learning disabilities field. A set of definitional elements (i.e., characteristics on which definitions might differ) is presented in the fourth section. In the fifth part, the definitions are compared according to these definitional elements. The final section is devoted to conclusions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITIONS IN LEARNING DISABILITIES

According to the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (Stern, 1967), the word *define* means to state the meaning of, to explain the nature or essential qualities of, to determine the boundaries of, or to make clear the form of something. From that perspective, proper definitions become essential if one is ever to know anything fully and com-

pletely. Socrates taught that real knowledge can be obtained only through a solute definition: if one cannot define something absolutely, then one does not really know what that something is (Stone, 1988). But Socrates also believed that people are inherently incapable of formulating ultimate definitions and therefore can never attain true and complete knowledge of anything. Yet, most of the Socratic dialogues recorded by Plato and Xenophon dealt with his efforts to define diverse terms. Obviously even though they may be out of our reach, ultimate definitions are vital to pursue because they lead to better, if not total, knowledge of a particular subject.

Precise definitions of handicapping conditions, for example, provide solid rationales for generating theories, formulating hypotheses, classifying disorders, selecting subjects, and communicating with others. Accordingly, study of a field cannot begin in earnest until interested individuals have agreed on the definition of the essential concepts that relate to that field. For example, everyone would immediately agree with the assertion by Socrates that a person could not possibly make a pair of shoes unless he or she first had a definite idea about the nature of shoes. By the same token, it is hard to understand how a professional could successfully identify, diagnose, prescribe treatment for, teach or remediate, motivate, or generally improve the life of a person who has a learning disability without first having a clear and accurate idea of the nature of a learning disability. At the very least, knowledge about the nature and characteristics of learning disabilities is certainly no liability for a professional working in this field.

A widely accepted definition of learning disabilities is essential to the future well-being of our field. Currently, without such a definition, professionals, parents, and legislators are confused, first about who does and does not have a learning disability, and then about whether such a thing as a learning disability ever exists. Because of this confusion, many professionals working in the learning disabilities field recognize the need for reaching a consensus on a definition. In fact, as noted previously, the field has been wrestling with definitional issues since 1962, when Kirk first defined the

term. Since then, we have made steady and considerable progress toward agreement on a definition; evidence of this progress is presented in this article.

IDENTIFYING PROMINENT DEFINITIONS

To establish which definitions have had the greatest influence on our field, 28 recent editions of textbooks that deal with learning disabilities were consulted. These books were generally representative of introductory or methods texts used in teacher training programs. All of the books were published between 1982 and 1989. Nineteen discussed how learning disabilities are or should be defined. The authors whose work includes discussions of definitions and definitional issues are Adelman and Taylor (1983, 1986); Bryan and Bryan (1986); DeRuiter and Wansart (1982); Gearheart and Gearheart (1989); Hallahan, Kauffman, and Lloyd (1985); C. Johnson (1981); D. Johnson and Blalock (1987); S. Johnson and Morasky (1980); Kavale, Forness, and Bender (1987); Kirk and Chalfant (1984); Lerner (1989); Lewis (1986); Lovitt (1989); Mercer (1987); Myers and Hammill (1982); Roswell and Natchez (1989); Siegel and Gold (1982); Sutaria (1985); and Wallace and McLoughlin (1988). These sources refer to a total of 11 different definitions that are prominent today or that experienced some degree of popularity at one time.

THE DEFINITIONS

The 11 definitions are discussed briefly in this section. Each discussion includes a short history of how and why the definition was proposed, the basic ideas incorporated within it, and the degree of influence the definition had on the field.

Kirk's Definition

A learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subjects resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sen-

sory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors. (Kirk, 1962, p. 263)

Kirk (1962) offered this definition in the first edition of his popular textbook, *Educating Exceptional Children*. The definition was further sanctioned after the publication of a widely read article by Kirk and Bateman in a 1962 issue of *Exceptional Children*.

According to Kirk's definition, learning disabilities are process problems that affect the language and academic performance of people of all ages. The cause of the problems is centered in either cerebral dysfunction or emotional/behavioral disturbance.

Siegel and Gold (1982) reported that this definition was used at the 1963 meeting wherein the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (now called the Learning Disabilities Association of America) was first organized. According to Sutaria (1985), Kirk no longer considers this definition to be valid. Kirk's current ideas are probably better reflected in the definitions written by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (NACHC) (1968) and the United States Office of Education (USOE) (1977). Bateman, also dissatisfied with this definition, advocated a very different version in 1965.

Bateman's Definition

Children who have learning disorders are those who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between their estimated intellectual potential and actual level of performance related to basic disorders in the learning process, which may or may not be accompanied by demonstrable central nervous dysfunction, and which are not secondary to generalized mental retardation, educational or cultural deprivation, severe emotional disturbance, or sensory loss. (Bateman, 1965, p. 220)

Bateman's definition differed markedly from the one she coauthored with Kirk in 1962: The idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy was introduced, no statement pertaining to cause was included, the emphasis was on children, and no examples of specific learning disabilities were provided.

According to this definition, learning disabilities are associated with process problems that lead to unspecified difficulties for underachieving children. This

definition was worded vaguely and did not gain the level of acceptance obtained by the Kirk definition. Bateman (personal communication, June 20, 1989) soon ceased to advocate this definition and today disagrees with many of its elements.

The National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children Definition

Children with special (specific) learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken and written language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems that are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage. (NACHC, 1968, p. 34)

The NACHC, a creation of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped within the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), was initially headed by Samuel Kirk. Its first annual report on January 31, 1968, included a definition of learning disabilities (NACHC, 1968). Not surprisingly, this definition was similar conceptually to Kirk's (1962), with three important exceptions: (a) Emotional disturbance was dropped as a stated cause for learning disabilities, (b) the learning disability condition was restricted to children, and (c) thinking disorders were added to language and academic problems as further examples of specific learning disability. Without a doubt, this was the seminal definition of learning disabilities, for it was the basis for the 1977 USOE definition that was incorporated into Public Law 94-142.

The Northwestern University Definition

- Learning disability refers to one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special education techniques for remediation.
- Children with learning disability generally demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one or more areas such as spoken, read, or written language, mathematics, and spatial orientation.

primarily the result of sensory, motor, intellectual, or emotional handicap, or lack of opportunity to learn.

- Significant deficits are defined in terms of accepted diagnostic procedures in education and psychology.
- Essential learning processes are those currently referred to in behavioral science as involving perception, integration, and expression, either verbal or nonverbal.
- Special education techniques for remediation refers to educational planning based on the diagnostic procedures and results. (Kass & Myklebust, 1969, pp. 378-379)

In an attempt to resolve the problems arising from too many diverse definitions, the USOE funded an Institute for Advanced Study at Northwestern University and charged its 15 participants with preparing a definition of learning disabilities that would be most advantageous for special education. The participants were H.R. Myklebust (Chair), S. Ashcroft, F.X. Blair, J.C. Chalfant, E. Deno, L. Fliegler, P. Hatlen, H. Heller, F. Hewett, C. Kass, S. Kirk, R. Ridgeway, H. Selznick, J. Taylor, and W. Wolfe. The proceedings of the institute were reported by Kass and Myklebust (1969) in an article in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.

The definition that emerged differed from that of the NACHC in several important ways. First, the idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy, articulated earlier by Bateman, was inserted into the definition. Second, no cause for learning disabilities was hypothesized. Third, thinking disorders were not listed among the examples of learning disabilities. Fourth, "disorders of spatial orientation" were mentioned for the first and only time in any definition as examples of specific learning disabilities.

This definition may have served as the basis for the development of the 1976 USOE definition. With the exception of the curious inclusion of "spatial orientation" problems, the ideas expressed in the two definitions are identical. The aptitude-achievement discrepancy concept in the institute's definition could have legitimized the inclusion of the IQ-achievement discrepancy formula in the 1976 USOE definition. Also, the conference that developed this definition was called for and funded by the USOE for the express purpose of resolving the definitional issue. At the time, many profes-

sional definition was sought was to help impose a cap on the total number of students being classified as learning disabled. No similar effort was made by the government to define any other conditions specified in P.L. 94-142. It is safe to assume that, when called upon to recommend an official definition years later, someone in the USOE would remember the Northwestern definition.

The CEC/DCLD Definition

A child with learning disabilities is one with adequate mental ability, sensory processes, and emotional stability who has specific deficits in perceptual, integrative, or expressive processes which impair learning efficiency. This includes children who have central nervous system dysfunction which is expressed primarily in impaired efficiency. (Siegel & Gold, 1982, p. 14)

In the late 1960s, a committee of the Division for Children with Learning Disabilities (DCLD), which was a unit within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), tried its hand at defining learning disabilities. The result of this effort was unique in one important way: The definition did not allow children with learning disabilities to be multihandicapped. That is, regardless of their educational problems, mentally retarded, blind, deaf, and emotionally disturbed children by definition could not have learning disabilities. Of the 11 definitions reviewed, only this one specifically rejected the idea that learning disabilities could coexist with other handicapping conditions.

Information on this definition proved to be elusive. It was referred to briefly by Siegel and Gold (1982) and Sutaris (1985), but no details were provided about the authors of the definition or about whether the definition was ever accepted officially by either of the two organizations with which it was associated. Two different dates are used in citations for this definition: Council for Exceptional Children, 1967 and 1971. The 1967 citation refers to an unpublished working definition used by DCLD. The 1971 citation refers to CEC's annual convention papers of that year. A search of the DCLD archives did not locate any information on the definition. Neither could CEC staff find any record of the 1971

information about this definition survives is an indication that it was never widely accepted.

Wepman et al.'s Definition

Specific learning disability, as defined here, refers to those children of any age who demonstrate a substantial deficiency in a particular aspect of academic achievement because of perceptual or perceptual-motor handicaps, regardless of etiology or other contributing factors. The term perceptual as used here relates to those mental (neurological) processes through which the child acquires . . . basic alphabets of sounds and forms. (Wepman, Cruickshank, Deutch, Morency, & Strother, 1975, p. 306)

The concern that too many diverse types of learning problems were being subsumed under a single label led to the development of at least one highly restrictive definition. In one of the position papers prepared by the National Project on the Classification of Exceptional Children, Wepman et al. (1975) proposed a new definition that limited learning disabilities to perceptual process-based academic problems.

Adelman and Taylor (1983) pointed out that the "elimination of exclusionary clauses and etiological considerations and restriction to perceptual functioning would undoubtedly reduce the types of persons likely to be labeled *learning disabled*" (p. 5). They concluded that to focus exclusively on perceptual correlates might be too limiting. Doubtless they were correct, for this definition also received limited acceptance.

The 1976 U.S. Office of Education Definition

A specific learning disability may be found if a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of several areas: oral expression, written expression, listening comprehension or reading comprehension, basic reading skills, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, or spelling. A "severe discrepancy" is defined to exist when achievement in one or more of the areas falls at or below 50% of the child's expected achievement level, when age and previous educational experiences are taken into consideration. (USOE, 1976, p. 52405)

In the 1976 *Federal Register*, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped within the USOE attempted to improve the

NACHC definition by adding operational diagnostic criteria. The significant component in this definition is the sentence containing the definition of "severe discrepancy" because it led to the development of a formula for calculating a severe discrepancy between intellect and achievement.

Opposition to the formula formed quickly and was heated in tone. Norman and Zigmond (1980) noted that critics attacked the formula for being mathematically unsound, claimed that its use selected students who were different from those being served, and asserted that its existence infringed upon states' rights. Mercer (1987) reported that when the USOE requested feedback, it received 962 mostly negative reactions to the proposed formula. Because of the large number of negative responses, the formula was dropped from later regulations. While some people were opposed to the particular formula proposed, others were opposed in principle to any use of so-called IQ-achievement discrepancy formulas to qualify students as having learning disabilities.

The arguments against the use of discrepancy formulas for identification purposes were probably best made in a position paper written by the Board of Trustees of the Council for Learning Disabilities (1986). The board listed eight substantial reasons for its objections and concluded that discrepancy formulas should not be used. Those reasons included questions about the psychometric adequacy of the test scores that were used in the formulas, and concerns that the formulas actually identified many non-learning-disabled persons while disqualifying many individuals who obviously had learning disabilities.

Though the USOE deleted this formula from its subsequent (1977) definition, many states seized on the idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy and subsequently designed and implemented their own formulas. Today, the value of these discrepancy formulas is one of the most hotly disputed issues in the field of learning disabilities.

The 1977 U.S. Office of Education Definition

The term "specific learning disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic psycho-

logical processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning disabilities which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (USOE, 1977, p. 65063)

Gearheart and Gearheart (1989) pointed out that during a House subcommittee hearing on P.L. 94-142, concern was expressed regarding the vagueness of the recommended definition of learning disabilities. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped was instructed to find a better definition and to spell out precisely how children might be identified. Even though an extensive effort was made to build a more specific definition, no consensus was achieved. Adelman and Taylor (1986) reported that, in the end, a compromise was worked out by the NACHC. The 1968 NACHC definition (with a few modifications) was adopted and incorporated into federal legislation in 1969; into P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; and into the Reauthorization of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1986. The 1977 date that is so often associated with this particular definition is the year it was published in the *Federal Register*.

In addition to the definition, a set of operational criteria was included in the *Federal Register* (1977) to guide efforts to identify students with learning disabilities. These criteria are curious in that they depart from the definition in several important and surprising ways. First, two prominent components in the federal definition were completely disregarded in the operational criteria. No criteria are provided for operationalizing either the process clause or the central nervous system (CNS) dysfunction component. These omissions probably indicate disagreement among those responsible about how to handle these two controversial elements. Second, the definition includes spelling among the specific learning disabilities, but it is missing in the criteria. Third, the definition implies that learning disabilities can exist at all ages, while

the use of the word "children" in the operational criteria seems to restrict the condition to young students. The fact that the identification criteria differ so dramatically from the definition confuses the issue of the nature of learning disabilities and lessens the likelihood that the 1977 USOE definition can serve as the definition of learning disabilities.

Hallahan et al. (1985) suggested that this official definition is the most widely accepted today because it is the one under which federal programs are administered and because it has been adopted by most state education agencies. Mercer (1987) and Gearheart and Gearheart (1989) provide particularly comprehensive discussions of the 1977 federal definition and the criteria that accompany it.

Readers should keep in mind that the 1977 USOE definition and its operational criteria were developed for the somewhat limited purpose of guiding funding practices associated with federal school legislation. Consequently, the emphasis is on school-aged children and academic subjects. It is likely that no one ever intended for this definition to serve as a comprehensive theoretical statement about the nature of learning disabilities, to account for all learning disabilities, or to indicate all times during life when they might be present.

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities Definition

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behavior, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences. (NJCLD, 1988, p. 1)

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) is composed of representatives of eight national

organizations that have a major interest in learning disabilities. Member organizations include the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), the Division for Children with Communication Disorders (DCCD), the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), the International Reading Association (IRA), the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the Orton Dyslexia Society (ODS). Approximately 225,000 individuals constitute the combined membership of these organizations. Readers interested in learning more about the history and mission of the NJCLD are referred to Abrams' (1987) overview.

Basically, the NJCLD representatives approved of the 1977 USOE definition but felt that it could be improved. In particular, some ambiguities resulting from the discrepancies between the definition and its operational criteria needed to be reconciled. It was also thought that the language of the 1977 definition could be clearer and more specific.

The reasons for these changes were spelled out in a position paper (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1981) and summarized by Hammill, Leigh, McNutt, and Larsen (1981). Briefly, the NJCLD thought an improved definition should (a) reinforce the idea that learning disabilities could exist at all ages, (b) delete the controversial phrase *basic psychological processes*, (c) draw a distinction between learning disabilities and learning problems, and (d) make clear that the "exclusion clause" did not rule out the coexistence of learning disabilities and other handicapping conditions.

After several years of study and debate, the representatives of the NJCLD unanimously approved the definition and in 1981 sent it to their respective organizations for consideration. The definition was subsequently accepted by all the organizations except LDA.

In 1983, the NJCLD modified its earlier definition to reflect the current state of knowledge relative to learning disability and to react to the definition developed by the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD). The ICLD definition is discussed later in this paper. The revised NJCLD definition

distinguished between learning disability and nonverbal disabilities such as those relating to social perception and self-regulatory behavior, reinforced the idea that learning disabilities occurred across the life span, and changed the wording of several points to make them more precise.

To date, ASHA, CLD, DCCD, IRA, NASP, and ODS have voted to adopt the definition; LDA has voted no; DLD has voted to abstain from voting on the issue. Under the rules of the NJCLD, the 1983 definition has secured the necessary number of adoptions and is now the official definition of the NJCLD.

The NJCLD definition, because of its broad support by the professional organizations, and the 1977 USOE definition, because of its official legislative status, are the most widely accepted definitions in use today. They share many elements; in fact, the NJCLD definition is in many ways an extension of the federal effort.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America Definition

Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or nonverbal abilities. Specific Learning Disabilities exist as a distinct handicapping condition and varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity. Throughout life, the condition can affect self esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities. (ACLD, 1986, p. 15)

After rejecting the 1981 NJCLD definition, the leaders of the LDA (formerly ACLD) chose to write a definition of their own. This definition and an accompanying rationale appeared in a 1986 issue of *ACLD Newsbriefs*.

It is difficult to determine from that article just what the framers of this definition had in mind. Their definition is in basic agreement with the NJCLD definition, but it differs in two important aspects. First, the definition fails to give any specific examples of the kinds of problems that can be classified as learning disabilities (e.g., problems involving reading, listening, writing, etc.). Instead, the definition refers rather obscurely to learning disabilities as problems of "verbal and/or nonverbal abilities." These terms are clarified in the rationale as

follows: "VERBAL OR NONVERBAL ABILITIES: were chosen as inclusive terms to emphasize not only receptive and expressive language problems, but also the conceptual and thinking difficulties, the integrating problems and motoric problems" (ACLD, 1986, p. 15). The unusual punctuation, ambiguous vocabulary, and awkward sentence structure used in the rationale combine to make interpretation very difficult. In addition, readers are left completely in the dark about the meaning of "nonverbal abilities." Does *nonverbal* mean "social skills"? Are problems in math included or excluded? What are "integrating problems"? Did the authors intend to include "motoric problems" among the learning disabilities (e.g., the penmanship problems of students with cerebral palsy)?

The second difference between the LDA definition and most other definitions is the omission in the former of an exclusion clause. Without some sort of statement dealing with the relationship of learning disabilities to other handicapping conditions, one cannot tell whether or not the LDA definition recognizes the multihandicapping nature of learning disabilities. Can learning disabilities coexist with mental retardation, environmental disadvantages, emotional disturbance, and so forth; or does the presence of these conditions eliminate any possibility that a person also can be learning disabled? Neither of these questions is answered by the LDA definition as it is presently worded.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that an earlier, widely distributed draft of the LDA definition was printed in an article titled, "Definition of the Condition of Specific Learning Disabilities." This draft included a sentence that read, "Specific Learning Disabilities exists as a distinct handicapping condition in the presence of average to superior intelligence, adequate sensory motor systems, and adequate learning opportunities" (ACLD, 1985, p. 1). This statement clearly indicates that a person with a learning disability cannot be multihandicapped. However, the sentence was deleted from the definition before final approval by the LDA Board and Delegate Assembly in March 1986. Unfortunately, the draft version containing the sentence has been widely reprinted and

is cited in popular textbooks by Adelman and Tavior (1986), Bryan and Bryan (1986), Gearhart and Gearhart (1989), Hallahan and Kauffman (1988), Lerner (1989), Lovin (1989), Mercer (1987), and Rowell and Natchez (1989). Not a single textbook that was reviewed for this study included a discussion of the correct LDA definition. The fact that the LDA definition receiving the most public exposure right now is *not* LDA's official statement (and actually is markedly different from it) cannot help but confuse professionals and parents.

While the LDA definition has some good qualities, it is not a serious contender to replace either the NJCLD or the 1977 USOE definition. Its wording is vague in critical areas, which prevents readers from formulating a precise conception of learning disabilities. With the exception of LDA members who read the 1986 *ACLD Newsbriefs*, most professionals and students in training probably know only the draft definition and are not even aware that a considerably different final version exists.

The Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities Definition

Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities, or of social skills. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance), with socioenvironmental influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors), and especially attention deficit disorder, all of which may cause learning problems, a learning disability is not the direct result of those conditions or influences. (Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1987, p. 222)

This effort to design an improved definition for learning disabilities was made by the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD) in 1987. This committee included representatives of 12 agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. The definition, which the committee proposed in a report sent to Congress, is "a modification of"

the NJCLD definition (ICLD, 1987, p. 222). The only substantive change that was made to the NJCLD definition was the addition of social skills to the list of specific learning disabilities.

The response to this alteration was swift. While agreeing that a person with a learning disability might also experience social problems, Silver (1988) asserted that "someone with significant difficulties with social skills but without deficits in one or more of the other six areas should not be considered learning disabled" (p. 79). (The six areas referred to by Silver are those spelled out in the 1977 USOE criteria.) Gresham and Elliott (1989) also questioned the desirability of considering social skill deficits to be primary learning disabilities. They further claimed that the evidence for viewing social skill deficits as primary learning disabilities was inconclusive and neither supported nor refuted by research.

The reaction from the NJCLD was more pointed. The role of social skills had been debated by them for years and, for a majority of the representatives, the issue had long been settled. Most of the NJCLD committee members did not view the insertion of "social skills" into its definition as an improvement. This was indicated in an official letter by Stan Dublinske, chairperson of the NJCLD, to Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Portions of the March 2, 1988, letter are reproduced below.

... The NJCLD was pleased that its 1981 definition provided the basis for the Interagency Committee's proposed definition. However, after considerable discussion of the proposed definition, the member organizations of NJCLD voted 7-1 to support the original NJCLD definition. Of particular concern was the addition of the phrase "or social skills" to the definition.

While the NJCLD does not support addition of the phrase "or social skills" to the definition, we do support efforts to clarify the relationship between learning disability and social learning problems. We recognize that learning disabilities may significantly affect the individual's patterns of social development and interaction, self esteem and activities of daily living. However, the NJCLD does not support the argument that these problems of social and personal adaptation constitute a separate and unique learning disability.

We also are concerned that the designation of social skills as a separate manifestation of

learning disability invites the inclusion in the category of individuals with significant psychiatric illness. Such an inclusion will only complicate problems relating to identification, diagnosis and intervention of children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities. (S. Dublinske, personal communication, March 2, 1988)

One should not assume that, because it was developed by a governmental committee, this definition had any broad-based official standing. On the contrary, Gresham and Elliott (1989) pointed out that the Department of Education has not endorsed the proposed definition, for three pragmatic reasons. The Department maintains that including social skills in the definition would (a) require a change in P.L. 94-142, (b) increase confusion concerning eligibility, and (c) increase the number of children classified as learning disabled. The position of the Department of Education is found on page 222 of the ICLD (1987) report. For these and other reasons, this definition will probably never obtain either official status or professional acceptance.

ELEMENTS BY WHICH DEFINITIONS MIGHT BE CONTRASTED

Having identified and described the prominent definitions, the next step was to identify important conceptual elements on which the definitions might differ. Studying of the 11 definitions revealed nine elements that might discriminate among them.

1. Underachievement/Determination

All the definitions reviewed adhere to the idea that an individual with learning disabilities is an underachiever. They do this in one of two ways. Some definitions imply by their wording that a state of underachievement exists when a person evidences uneven patterns of development (i.e., a person is appreciably better in some skills/abilities than in others). The authors of these definitions refer to problems in "one or more" abilities, to "specific" rather than general deficits, to "deficiency in a particular problem area," and so forth. This idea is consistent with Gallagher's (1966) reference to "develop-

reference to "discrepancies in growth," to Woodcock's (1984) reference to "intra-cognitive and intraachievement discrepancies," and to Kirk and Chalfant's (1964) reference to "intraindividual differences." Thus, underachievement can be determined by the study of *intraindividual ability differences*. For example, underachievement (and potential learning disabilities) might be verified by observing that a person is good in reading and relatively poor in math.

Other definitions suggest that underachievement is indicated by the presence of *aptitude-achievement discrepancies*. Here a significant difference between intellectual ability (usually represented by an IQ) and performance in one or more of the learning disability areas is indicative of underachievement. For example, a difference between an IQ and a quotient from a reading test demonstrates underachieving performance and thus the possible presence of a learning disability. Obviously, the use of aptitude-achievement discrepancy is a special application of the intraindividual ability approach.

2. CNS Dysfunction Etiology

Some definitions specify that the cause for the learning disability is known or suspected to be the result of a problem in the central nervous system (CNS). Other definitions are silent on the etiological issue.

3. Process Involvement

Some definitions express the idea that, regardless of the learning disability's cause, its effect is to disrupt the psychological processes that make proficient performance possible in some skill or ability area. Other definitions make no mention of process dysfunction.

4. Being Present Throughout the Life Span

Most definitions imply that learning disabilities can be present at any age. The definitions do this by avoiding language that would lead the reader to think otherwise. Generally, the authors of such definitions begin their statements with, "The

... learning disabilities are" Other definitions limit learning disabilities to children, especially those of school age, and usually begin with, "Children with learning disabilities"

5. Specification of Spoken Language Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that spoken language problems (e.g., those involving listening and speaking) can be learning disabilities. Others do not single out spoken language problems.

6. Specification of Academic Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that certain types of academic problems (e.g., those involving reading, writing, spelling, or math) can be learning disabilities; others are silent regarding academic problems.

7. Specification of Conceptual Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that certain types of conceptual problems (e.g., those involving thinking and reasoning) can be learning disabilities. Others do not address the subject of conceptual problems.

8. Specification of Other Conditions as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that problems other than academic, language, or conceptual disorders can be learning disabilities. For instance, problems involving social skills, spatial orientation, integration, or motor abilities are mentioned.

9. Allowance for the Multihandicapping Nature of Learning Disabilities

Three scenarios exist within this element. First, the definitions may clearly indicate that learning disabilities can coexist with other kinds of handicaps (e.g., mental retardation, emotional disturbance, sensory and motor impairment).

These definitions generally make the distinction between primary and secondary problems. For example, in a blind child, the inability to read print is *primarily* the result of the inability to see. This same child could have a spoken language learning disability that was *secondary* to the blindness (i.e., it coexists with the blindness).

Second, definitions can have exclusionary clauses that are worded to eliminate the coexistence of learning disabilities with other handicapping conditions. According to these definitions, it would be impossible for a mentally retarded person to have a learning disability. Third, some definitions are silent on the issue.

CONTRASTING THE DEFINITIONS

The status of each of the 11 definitions regarding these nine elements was determined by studying the definitions (see Table 1). By comparing entries in the table, one may contrast the conceptual contents of the various definitions.

After documenting the characteristics of the 11 definitions relative to the nine elements, it was a simple matter to, next, compute the percentages of agreement among the definitions and to present these percentages in Table 2. Consider, for example, the definitions of Kirk and Bateman. In Table 1, one can readily see that the two definitions are in agreement on four elements (i.e., they both include a process clause, neither makes mention of thinking disorders, neither offers other examples of learning disabilities, and both adhere to the idea that learning disabilities can coexist with other handicapping conditions). Dividing the number of elements in agreement (four) by the total number of possible elements (nine) results in the percentage of agreement (44%) between the two definitions. The larger the percentage of agreement between two definitions, the greater their conceptual similarity.

Knowing percentages of agreement made it possible to note any clusters among the definitions. By reviewing the percentages reported in Table 2, one will note that only 10 are possible: 0, 11, 22, 33, 44, 56, 67, 78, 89, and 100. Therefore, 67% agreement was arbitrarily ac-

TABLE 1
Status of Definitions Relative to Definitional Elements

Definition	Underachievement determination	Definitional elements							Adjusted for multihandicap
		CNS dysfunction	Process clause	Life span	Language	Academic	Thinking	Other	
Kirk (1962)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Bateman (1965)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
NACHC (1966)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Northwestern (1968)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Spatial Orientation	Yes
CEC/DCLD (1967, 1971)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Wepman et al. (1973)	Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	— ^a
USOE (1976)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
USOE (1977)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NJCLD (1988)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ACLD (1989)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Integration; Motor	— ^a
ICLD (1987)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Social Skills	Yes

^aDefinitions silent on this element.

cepted as the criterion for a strong relationship. This percentage indicates that two definitions agree on six of nine definitional elements. Using this figure as the base, the following definitions were found to be strongly related: 1,3; 1,7; 1,8; 1,9; 1,11; 2,4; 2,5; 2,6; 2,7; 3,7; 3,8; 3,9; 3,11; 4,7; 5,6; 6,7; 7,8; 8,9; 8,11; 9,10; 9,11; 10,11. From these combinations, one can easily gather that definitions 2, 4, 5, and 6 form one cluster and definitions 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 form a second cluster.

The definitions that each cluster comprises are listed in Table 3, along with their status relative to the nine definitional elements. In addition, a composite that shows the status of the cluster relative to the elements is presented. Table 3 also contains the percentages of agreement among the definitions on each element. For example, the first cluster includes four definitions. According to data in Table 3, they all agree on three elements (process clause, life span, thinking); therefore, the percentage of agreement is 100 in those instances. A 75% agreement indicates that three out of the four definitions in Cluster 1 agree on a particular conceptual element. In the two cases where the definitions are split evenly, the percentage of agreement is listed as 50-50. With regard to the "multihandicapping" element in Cluster 1, two definitions held that learning disabilities could coexist with other conditions, one definition presented a view to the contrary, and

one was silent on the topic. Since half of the definitions agreed, the agreement recorded was 50%. Agreement of 50% or less was taken to mean that no consensus existed among the definitions in the cluster.

Cluster 1 comprises the definitions proposed by Bateman, Northwestern, CEC/DCLD, and Wepman et al. A composite of the collective ideas expressed in these definitions would read as follows: *Children with learning disabilities suffer from basic disorders in the learning processes that enable a person to achieve.* This definition is painfully obscure and obviously unacceptable. It is easy to see why most professionals moved in the definitional direction indicated by Cluster 2.

The seven definitions that compose Cluster 2 are those of Kirk, NACHC, 1976 USOE, 1977 USOE, NJCLD,

LDA, and ICLD. A composite definition based on these ideas would be nearly identical to those of Kirk, the NACHC, the 1977 USOE, and the NJCLD. By comparing the composite in Table 3 with the four definitions, one can note agreement on eight of the nine elements. This represents 89% agreement on critical definitional characteristics.

This cluster can be considered Kirk's legacy to the learning disability definition. His influence, after framing his own definition, on the subsequent NACHC and 1977 USOE definitions was considerable. The NJCLD definition was merely an effort to improve on the 1977 USOE definition; and the more recent ICLD definition is nearly identical in language and thought to the NJCLD definition, with one very important exception—its inclusion of social skills.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Agreement Among the 11 Definitions on the Nine Elements

Definitions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Kirk	—	44	78	56	56	56	67	100	78	56	67
2. Bateman	—	—	44	67	67	67	78	44	22	0	11
3. NACHC	—	—	—	56	56	56	67	78	78	56	67
4. Northwestern	—	—	—	—	33	56	60	56	33	22	33
5. CEC/DCLD	—	—	—	—	—	67	44	56	33	22	22
6. Wepman et al.	—	—	—	—	—	—	67	56	33	22	22
7. 1976 USOE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	67	44	22	33
8. 1977 USOE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	78	56	67
9. NJCLD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	78	60
10. ACLD (LDA)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	78
11. ICLD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE 2
Characteristics of Definitional Clusters

Definitions by number	Underdevelopment determination	CBS dysfunction	Process clause	Life span	Language	Academics	Thinking	Other	Adverse for middle/low group
Cluster 1:									
Baron (1985)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Baron (1985)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Behavioral Orientation	Yes
CJCLD (1987, 1977)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Wernsen et al. (1978)	Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	— ^a
Composite	Aptitude-Achievement Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	No/Yes	No	No	Yes
Percentage Agreement	80-80	75	90	100	75	80-80	100	75	80
Cluster 2:									
Kirk (1982)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NACIC (1988)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
USOE (1978)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
USOE (1977)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NJCLD (1987)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ACLD (1988)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Integration, Motor, Social Skills	— ^a
ICLD (1987)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Skills	Yes
Composite	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes/ ^a
Percentage Agreement	88	88	87	71	90	100	87	71	80

^aDefinitions stand on this element.

CONCLUSIONS

What can one conclude from this reflection on definitional issues in learning disabilities? Two conclusions seem obvious. First, and contrary to popular opinion, considerable agreement exists today among the definitions and definers. This is both surprising and encouraging. Second, of the current viable definitions, the one by the NJCLD is probably the best descriptive statement about the nature of learning disabilities.

Consensus Is Near

The fact that every important definition of learning disabilities currently enjoying any degree of popularity was found in Cluster 2 suggests that there is consensus in the field. Additional evidence of consensus is found in the relationship among the four definitions that have been developed since 1977 (USOE, NJCLD, LDA, and ICLD). Of these, the most influential definitions are the first two. They were the most frequently mentioned in the 28 texts reviewed for this article. The definitions by LDA and

ICLD are recently formulated contenders set forth to correct perceived omissions or to clarify statements in the other two definitions. There can be no question, however, that the four definitions are in fundamental agreement on most issues related to the definition of learning disabilities.

In Table 2, the six percentages of agreement at the lower right (i.e., 78%, 56%, 67%, 78%, 89%, and 78%) represent the relationships among the recent definitions. The mean percentage of agreement is 74. These figures illustrate a strong relationship among the definitions and indicate that consensus is near.

The NJCLD Definition Presently Is the Best

Of the 11 definitions discussed in this paper, only 4 are professionally viable today (i.e., the 1977 USOE, NJCLD, LDA, and ICLD definitions). These definitions were consistently referred to in the 28 textbooks reviewed for this article. The remaining seven definitions have historical value only. Of the four viable ones, the definition written by the

NJCLD has the best chance of becoming the consensus definition. This is in part because it has many good attributes, and also because the other definitions have problems that disqualify them as comprehensive statements about learning disabilities.

The main limitation of the 1977 USOE definition is its inclusion of a psychological process clause. Objection to the process clause is based on the term's lack of specificity and the suspicion that it might refer to the once-popular perceptual notions advocated by Frostig, Kephart, Getman, and others during the 1960s. Latter-day process-oriented professionals could make an argument that the current processing theories espoused by Ann Brown, Palincsar, Torgesen, Borkowski, Swanson, and Hallahan are more defensible than earlier versions and thereby deserve some consideration in a learning disability definition. If the new processing theories prove to be valid, useful, and capable of being operationalized, perhaps the NJCLD definition could be amended, or some new definition set forth at a later time. For the time being, however, it seems most

prudent to follow the example of the four currently viable definitions, which play down or delete the psychological process clause. The clause was not operationalized in the identification criteria accompanying the 1977 USOE definition, nor do any of the other three definitions include such a clause.

Another limitation of the 1977 USOE definition is the fact that it is inconsistent with its own operational criteria on several key points (see the earlier discussion of this definition). Because of these inconsistencies, the definition has diminished value as a precise, comprehensive, and descriptive statement about learning disabilities. In addition, the definition makes no mention of thinking disorders, which the other three recent definitions list as an example of a specific learning disability.

The main limitations of the LDA definition are its lack of clarity concerning which disorders constitute learning disabilities and its ambiguity about the multihandicapping nature of learning disabilities. Regrettably, most people's opinions about the LDA definition are based on an early published draft of the definition, which was never approved by LDA. While this unauthorized, and thereby useless, definition has enjoyed a wide distribution, relatively few professionals have encountered LDA's officially endorsed definition in the literature.

The main limitation of the ICLD definition is the inclusion of social skills in the listing of primary learning disabilities. Neither the 1977 USOE definition nor the NJCLD definition specifies social skills as learning disabilities; it is difficult to tell whether the authors of the LDA definition intended social skills to be an example of a specific learning disability. If they considered social skills to be a type of nonverbal ability, they should have stated this clearly instead of listing integration and motor problems as the only examples of nonverbal disabilities. With the USOE and NJCLD definitions omitting social skills, the LDA definition equivocal on the issue, and the Department of Education reluctant to endorse the definition, it is unlikely that the ICLD definition will receive wide acceptance in the years to come.

The NJCLD definition has many advantages, some of which have been re-

ferred to in this paper. It is also blessed with few liabilities, which is not the case with the other definitions. The percentages reported in Table 2 show that the NJCLD definition is strongly related to the other three current definitions (i.e., those of the USOE, LDA, and ICLD). It is at once everyone's definition and no one's. It was written by a committee that was the creation of ASHA, CLD, NASP, DLD, IRA, DCCD, LDA, and ODS. The definition is "owned" by the organizations that have officially adopted it and the individuals who have accepted it. This is very different from, and possibly superior to, a definition that is the creation of a particular governmental agency, association, or individual.

The NJCLD never intended to write the perfect definition, only a better one. A study of the definitions discussed in this paper suggests that the committee was successful in its efforts. The NJCLD definition has obtained a high level of acceptance among multiple national associations and individuals and is arguably the best one that is presently available. None of the NJCLD members believe that their definition has settled the issue for all time.

Political realities are such that the NJCLD definition may never replace the 1977 USOE definition in law. But this may not be important. What is important, however, is that professionals and parents unite around one definition so that we can say with assurance, "This is what we mean when we say learning disabilities."

For too long, textbook authors, researchers, and teacher educators in the area of learning disabilities have ignored the definitional issue by writing or talking about definitions instead of presenting and discussing a definition that they believe can be supported. For example, many textbook authors list, usually without any discussion, two or three definitions of learning disabilities. Often, all of these definitions take conflicting stands on important issues. The authors rarely tell their readers which definition is the most defensible statement about learning disabilities and the one around which they have organized the content of their book.

The evolving consensus on the definition of learning disabilities comes at an

opportune time. Many professionals and others who want to cut services for individuals with learning disabilities cite the lack of agreement on the definitional issue as a justification. If professionals, parents, and governmental agents cannot find common ground in defining learning disabilities, then they might not long have a field in which to contest the issue. Without a common frame of reference (which a widely accepted definition provides), we are unable to decide who individuals with learning disabilities are or how they differ from others. Neither can practitioners justify their placement, diagnostic, funding, and treatment practices. The NJCLD definition provides a viable definitional umbrella under which all of us may find shelter. It may serve us well during the rainy days ahead.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donald D. Hammill, EdD, is president of PRO-ED, Inc. and trustee of the Donald D. Hammill Foundation. He received degrees in secondary education and educational psychology (special education) from The University of Texas at Austin and served on the teaching faculties of Wichita State University and Temple University (Philadelphia). He presently represents the Council for Learning Disabilities on the NJCLD. Address: Donald D. Hammill, 8700 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, TX 78758.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, J.C. (1987). The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities: History, mission, and process. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 20, 102-106.
- Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (1983). *Learning disabilities in perspective*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (1986). *An introduction to learning disabilities*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. (1983). *Definition of the condition of specific learning disabilities*. *ACLD Newsbrief*, 138, 1-3.
- Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. (1986). *ACLD description: Specific learning disabilities*. *ACLD Newsbrief*, pp. 15-16.
- Bennett, B. (1983). An educational view of a diagnostic approach to learning disorders. In J. Hammill (Ed.), *Learning disorders* (Vol. 1, pp. 219-239). *Scientific Special Child Publications*.
- Board of Trustees of the Council for Learning Disabilities. (1986). *Use of discrepancy formulas in the identification of learning disabled individuals*. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 9, 245.
- Bryan, T.H., & Bryan, J.H. (1986). *Understanding learning disabilities* (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

- Council for Exceptional Children. Division for Children with Learning Disabilities. (1967). Working definition of learning disabilities. Unpublished manuscript.
- Council for Exceptional Children. Division for Children with Learning Disabilities. (1971). Annual convention papers. Reston, VA: Author.
- DeRamus, J.A., & Wamsler, W.L. (1982). Psychology of learning disabilities. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- Gallagher, J.J. (1964). Children with developmental imbalances: A psychoeducational definition. In W.M. Cruickshank (Ed.), *The teacher of brain injured children* (pp. 21-43). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Gearhart, B.R., & Gearhart, C.J. (1989). *Learning disabilities: Educational strategies* (5th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Gresham, F.M., & Elliott, S.N. (1989). Social skill deficits as a primary learning disability. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22, 120-124.
- Hollahan, D.P., & Kauffman, J.M. (1988). *Exceptional children*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hollahan, D.P., Kauffman, J.M., & Lloyd, J.W. (1983). *Introduction to learning disabilities*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Honnold, D., Leigh, J., McHart, G., & Loran, S. (1981). A new definition of learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 4, 336-342.
- Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities. (1967). *Learning disabilities: A report to the U.S. Congress*. Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health.
- Johnson, C. (1981). *The diagnosis of learning disabilities*. Boulder, CO: Pruett.
- Johnson, D.J., & Blalock, J.W. (Eds.). (1987). *Adults with learning disabilities: Clinical studies*. Orlando, FL: Grune & Stratton.
- Johnson, S.W., & Morawky, R.L. (1980). *Learning disabilities* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Kass, C., & Myklebust, H. (1969). Learning disability: An educational definition. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 2, 377-379.
- Kavale, K.A., Forness, S.R., & Bender, M. (1987). *Handbook on learning disabilities*. Boston: College-Hill.
- Kirk, S.A. (1962). *Educating exceptional children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kirk, S.A., & Bateman, B. (1962). Diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 29, 73-78.
- Kirk, S.A., & Chatfield, J. (1984). *Academic and developmental learning disabilities*. Denver: Love.
- Lerner, J. (1989). *Learning disabilities* (5th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lewis, M. (Ed.). (1986). *Learning disabilities and personal risk*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Lovitt, T. (1989). *Introduction to learning disabilities*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Marcus, C.D. (1987). *Students with learning disabilities* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Myers, P., & Hammill, D. (1982). *Learning disabilities*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children. (1968). *Special education for handicapped children* (First Annual Report). Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, & Welfare.
- National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (1981). *Learning disabilities: Issues on definition*. Unpublished manuscript. (Available from The Orion Dyslexia Society, 724 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21204. Reproduced in *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 20, 107-108.)
- National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (1980). (Letter to NUCLD member organizations).
- Norman, C.A., & Zigmond, N. (1980). Characteristics of children labeled and served as learning disabled in school systems affiliated with Child Service Demonstration Centers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 9, 342-347.
- Roswell, F.G., & Nascher, G. (1989). *Reading disability* (4th ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Siegel, E., & Gold, R. (1982). *Educating the learning disabled*. New York: Macmillan.
- Silver, L.B. (1988). A review of the federal government's Interagency Committee on Learning Disability Report to the U.S. Congress. *Learning Disabilities Focus*, 3(2), 73-80.
- Stern, J. (1967). *Random House dictionary of the English language*. New York: Random House.
- Stone, I.F. (1988). *The trial of Socrates*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Sutera, S.D. (1983). *Specific learning disabilities*. Springfield, IL: Thomas.
- United States Office of Education. (1976). Education of handicapped children. *Federal Register*, 41:53405. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- United States Office of Education. (1977). Definition and criteria for defining students as learning disabled. *Federal Register*, 42:250, p. 65083. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wallace, G., & McLoughlin, J.A. (1988). *Learning disabilities: Concepts and characteristics* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Wapman, J., Cruickshank, W., Drusch, C., Maroney, A., & Strother, C. (1973). *Learning disabilities*. In N. Hobbs (Ed.), *Issues in the classification of children* (Vol. 1, pp. 300-317). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Woodcock, R. (1984). A response to some questions raised about the Woodcock-Johnson II. *Efficiency of the aptitude clusters*. *School Psychology Review*, 13, 355-362.

A WORKING DEFINITION

SESSION ONE

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

ALTERNATIVE ESL SCENARIO

ALICIA S.

Alicia S. is a 28-year-old migrant farmworker from Mexico. Each year she, her husband Carlos, and their three young children follow the crops from the San Joaquin Valley near Sacramento, California, up to Yakima Valley in Washington, much as she had done with her parents and her five brothers when she was a child. She has been picking sweet potatoes and apples since she was 13, and she is accustomed to spending up to 12 hours in the fields each day, as she only gets paid for what she picks. Alicia loves playing the guitar, making flower arrangements, and playing with her children, but she seldom has time to devote to these activities.

Alicia's school experiences were characterized by a long list of temporary school placements in Mexico and the United States. The frequent moves and short stays made it difficult for Alicia to form friendships or to become proficient in English or to keep up with her schoolwork. Teachers found her to be shy and hesitant in class and seldom called on her. She found it difficult to understand basic conversation in English or more complex concepts in Spanish. While she could recite the Spanish and English alphabets and write a few words in Spanish, she did not learn to write a full sentence in either language.

When she was a young teenager, Alicia's parents allowed her to work in the fields. Relieved to be removed finally from the stress of the school environment, she willingly dropped out of the eighth grade and never returned to school. Now, 15 years later, as she sees her own children in school and picking up English very well, Alicia wants to try to learn again. She and her husband have grown weary of the travel, sleeping in their run-down car, and of having to pull their children from school so often. Alicia wants her children to learn to speak and write English fluently, and she would like to teach them how to play the guitar. Eventually, Alicia would like to settle out and stay in the Sacramento Valley, where she hopes to one day have her own flower shop.

ALTERNATIVE CASE STUDY: RON WHITE

For 25 years I felt like a nobody because I could not read or spell correctly. I felt ashamed when friends of mine who had been in college talked over my head. But when it came to remodeling kitchens and bathrooms, I was a wizard. This seemed so simple for me to do, but a book was the heaviest tool for me to pick up unless someone read it to me.

In public school in Boston I had such a hard time reading that I lost all interest except in cabinet-making and math, which I could do with no problem. Because of poor reading I was placed in a special class beginning in the middle of the fourth grade, but this did nothing for my reading. From the fourth grade on until the ninth grade I got no help in reading but continued to have great attendance and to go to woodworking classes to make furniture for the teachers. In my ninth grade year, I was introduced to a teacher named Emerson Dicke who took a special interest in trying to find out what my problems in reading were. But I only had him for one year and then I quit school at sixteen.

After I quit school, I worked in a hardware store. When I was nineteen, I joined the U.S. Navy. After my discharge two years later I returned to work in the hardware store. In August of 1970 I was hired to operate a bus for the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) in Boston. In the years after I left school, I would listen to the radio news stations and hear how many drop-outs were still coming from the Boston school system and how low the reading, writing and math scores were. Because of this, I thought I had no chance of getting help if I returned to school. Also, I would drive public school students on my local bus run, and all they would talk about was how they could skip classes. I realized from their talk that there was little learning going on in the schools and this discouraged me.

In my job I advanced to starter and then inspector, assistant station master and night/weekend supervisor. The night/weekend supervisor's job involved a lot of paperwork, such as accident reports, discipline reports and service interruption reports. This was my downfall because of my reading and spelling, not my ability to complete the physical and management tasks of the job. I relied on my sister and later my sister-in-law to complete all the paperwork needed. I would dictate the reports to them on the phone. Then I would leave the office to check service and sneak over to their homes to pick up the reports and put them in the next day's mail.

But then I was assigned to fill in as acting assistant station master downtown and I knew I couldn't escape from that office to pick up paperwork at my sister-in-law's. I had sleepless nights thinking about this job, knowing that my secret would be out. I turned this job down and rebid for a trolley driver's job immediately. I took that job, which was a four-step self-demotion, because I felt comfortable there. I then rebid a job as a car cleaner, which was another step down, so I could get

away from people who knew I had turned down the assistant station master's job and were wondering why.

At this low point in my life, I got involved with drugs. My involvement lasted for three and a half years. Then friends of mine took an interest in me and showed me a new way of life through the twelve-step program of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

The turning point that caused me to return to education occurred when I was attending AA. When I was asked to read from the twelve-step book, my whole body would turn into a puddle of sweat from nerves so I would refuse to read and would pass the book on. Then one Friday night a young man tried to read and two men behind me began to laugh at his reading. This angered me tremendously. Then my sponsor told me that the next Friday night I would have to read. I did not show up that Friday night and I discussed my reading problem with my sponsor that weekend. He suggested that I go to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Mass. Rehab sent me to Suzanne Perlman, a psychologist, to be tested. She found me to be dyslexic and recommended a one-to-one tutor.

I started on one-to-one tutoring with Carolyn Buell Kidder on March 23, 1988. Carolyn's tutoring in phonics dramatically improved my reading. My self-confidence has improved so that now I am able to talk about my problem in an effort to help others with dyslexia. I received a promotion in June 1988 to Operations Foreman: Light Rail Department. As a result of my new abilities, I do not have to involve my sister-in-law anymore in spelling almost every word for me at work. Also, I can now read the special bulletins I receive at work on safety and equipment by myself. I do not have to ask someone else at work to read them for me.

On September 28, 1988 I returned to school on a part-time basis at night to earn a high school diploma. In January of 1989 I switched to full-time nights. I particularly enjoyed the science and history courses due to the fact that we had wonderful teachers. My grades were all 90 or above. This fall I am taking a writing course and I am also still attending reading tutoring in phonics, which is a great help with the writing course.

When the writing course ends in December, I will have completed all the requirements for my high school diploma. I will receive the diploma in June at the graduation ceremonies. In the near future I plan to attend a college that helps people with learning disabilities such as dyslexia. My job prospects are unlimited as long as I continue in higher education. Also, in the near future I will read aloud from the twelve-step book at the AA meeting which I have never returned to since that Friday night when the two men laughed at the poor reader. I am also going to speak at that meeting. I will say: "We are here to help each other, not to laugh at each other." I will speak about dyslexia and how I have hid behind it for years. Now I am not ashamed to talk about it or read aloud, thanks to the fellowship of NA and the teachers who taught me to read.

SCREENING: SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES

Participants may ask about screening. The following will provide you with background to respond to their questions. Increasingly, adult education programs are using screening instruments to identify learning problems. Although they can be useful, they also can be misused.

When appropriate training has been provided, an instructor or program may decide to employ a screening tool as a result of:

- An interview with an adult learner;
- Self-identification by the learner; or
- Problems identified by the teacher.

Screening may be introduced after a needs assessment (e.g., if the student identifies persistent and pervasive problems in the memory area) or when monitoring of student progress suggests that things are not working.

Screening can be seen as one part of a step-by-step referral process. It is a step between the needs assessments and teacher-student targeting that should be done for all students and a step before formal evaluation by a professional. Such evaluation can be expensive, time-consuming, and is unnecessary for many students. When there is awareness of its limits, screening can help students and teachers further target specific learning needs, and according to Jovita Ross-Gordon, "identify alternative instructional strategies for students who may or may not have specific learning disabilities" (Ross-Gordon, 1989, p. 26). In doing so, however, teachers and students should understand "the major risk" that Ross-Gordon identified: "(T)he use of such screening instruments" for diagnostic purposes is "inappropriate to diagnose learning disabilities." (See excerpt from the Ross-Gordon paper in the Supplementary Readings section, R-4.)

To make these concepts clear, the trainer should make the following points:

- **Screening is not a formal assessment of diagnosis.** Remind participants that formal assessment is to be conducted by the "outside professional."
- **Screening may suggest a range of learning problems that a professional evaluation could identify as mild, moderate, or extreme.** (In the Supplementary Readings section, R-6, we have included a copy of a screening tool, *Cooper Screening of Information Processing*, that has been employed successfully in a number of adult literacy programs. Explain that the full instrument is included in the packet to show participants what it looks like.
- **Teachers should not use a screening instrument unless trained in the use of the instrument.**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, ACTION RESEARCH, AND COLLABORATION

Reflective Teaching. Reflective practice is a term developed by Donald Schon (1983). The term describes the competence and artistry embedded in "reflection in action." Reflective practitioners think about what they are doing while they are doing it and adapt their approaches in situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict. Reflective practice contrasts with what are sometimes called technical or technical-rational approaches that view practice as the fixed application of technical approaches or the deductive application of school-learned knowledge to the problems of practice. Reflective teachers are researchers and artists; they demonstrate the ability to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

The Teacher as Researcher. Action research is a term used to describe research — the observation, comparison, contrast, and reflection — taking place when researchers engage in social practice. It is based on the premise that researchers can make useful observations and gain useful insights while engaging in action. When done effectively, action researchers reflect both on what they see and on how their own interpretive perspective (their point of view, sources of theory, and values) affect their understanding of what they see. Action research can be applied to the work that teachers do when they observe, compare, contrast, and reflect on what happens in the classroom — not as an outside participant observer but as an "unusually observant participant who deliberates inside the scene of action" (Erickson, 1986, p. 157). Action research is a necessary tool of the reflective practitioner.

Collaborative Research. Collaborative research is a term used to describe research in which participants play a central role from the design of research through its implementation and analysis. Collaborative research has been applied to endeavors in education, where: (1) researchers and school practitioners work together on the design, implementation, and evaluation of research; (2) the research focuses on "real world" as well as theoretical problems; (3) both groups gain in understanding and mutual respect; and (4) their effort concerns the interests of both the researcher (research) and practitioners (development/implementation) (Oakes, Hare, Sirotnik, 1986). Collaborative research can be applied in learner-centered adult education to situations where students and teachers, as well as students (alone) and teachers (alone) meet to design, implement, and reflect on research. Collaborative research expands the knowledge and perspective that teachers can bring to their work as action researchers.

TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

SESSION THREE

HANDOUT MASTERS

HANDOUTS
SESSION ONE

**You Are Invited to Attend
A Free, Three-Session Workshop on**

**LEARNING DISABILITIES:
LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES**

By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

Date of Session 1: _____ Time: _____

Date of Session 2: _____ Time: _____

Date of Session 3: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Trainers: _____

Sponsors: _____

Please complete and return this portion to: _____

☐ Yes, I would like to attend the three-session workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches*. I agree to attend all sessions. If I am accepted, please send me a questionnaire. Send to:

Name: _____ Telephone: (____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES WORKSHOP: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

If you plan to attend the workshop on Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches, please complete this form and send it to the address at the right by _____.
(date)

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you at the workshop.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Please check the appropriate boxes below.

1. Are you teaching now? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are you a volunteer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If "yes," what subject(s) do you currently teach?

☐ Adult Basic Education

☐ English as a Second Language

☐ Other, please specify: _____

4. In which of the following settings do you currently teach? Check all that apply.

☐ Classroom

☐ Learning Laboratory

☐ One-on-One Tutoring

☐ Computerized Instruction

☐ Distance Learning

☐ Other, please specify: _____

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

5. Please indicate the number of years you have taught each of the groups listed below. (If you have taught for less than one year, write "1".)

- ☐ Adults
- ☐ High School/Junior High School
- ☐ Elementary/Preschool Students

6. What kind of instructor training have you received? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Credential program in adult education
- ☐ College courses on adult education
- ☐ Workshops/conferences on adult education
- ☐ Credential program in elementary/secondary education
- ☐ College courses on elementary/secondary education
- ☐ Workshops/conferences on elementary/secondary education

7. How informed are you about the following topics? Circle the number that best rates your knowledge of each topic.

	Completely un-informed		Extremely well-informed	
Motivating Students	1	2	3	4
Students' Self-Esteem	1	2	3	4
Learning Styles	1	2	3	4
Metacognition	1	2	3	4
Cooperative Learning	1	2	3	4
Student-Centered Learning	1	2	3	4
Context-Based Learning	1	2	3	4
Education for Social Change	1	2	3	4

Before you come to Session One, have in mind an example of one student you are working with and with whom you would like to be more effective in teaching. You will revisit this student at various points during the workshops, and will work with that individual for interim task assignments.

PERSON SEARCH

1. _____ Someone who has worked in adult education less than 5 years.
2. _____ Someone who has worked in adult education more than 15 years.
3. _____ Recently moved to a new state.
4. _____ Is a teacher of ESL students.
5. _____ Was married within the last year.
6. _____ Changed jobs within the last year.
7. _____ Teaches at a community college.
8. _____ Teaches at the middle/high school level.
9. _____ Teaches at the elementary level.
10. _____ Jogs regularly.
11. _____ Has had a baby within the last year.
12. _____ Is a Chicago Bulls fan.
13. _____ Is a Dallas Cowboys fan.
14. _____ Lives near a beach.
15. _____ Lives near the mountains.
16. _____ Vacationed out of the country in the last year.
17. _____ Is working on an advanced degree.
18. _____ Has been to the White House.
19. _____ Takes public transportation to work.
20. _____ Voted in the last election.
21. _____ Lives in the same town where (s)he grew up.
22. _____ Is a visual learner.
23. _____ Is an auditory learner.
24. _____ Is a tactile/kinesthetic learner.
25. _____ Does not like chocolate ice cream.

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION ONE AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

- AGENDA:**
- I. Introduction/Workshop Overview
 - Icebreaker Activity
 - Agenda, Objectives
 - II. Adults First and Last
 - III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability
 - From Difference to Disability
 - A Working Definition
 - BREAK
 - IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation
 - V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person
 - VI. Interim Task Assignment
 - VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation

GLOSSARY

Accommodation	Adjusting approaches and environments to meet particular needs. In the case of learning difficulties and learning disabilities, accommodation refers to the use of learning strengths and adaptive strategies to meet the specific instructional needs of the learner.
Agaphia	Inability to write words or manipulate a writing instrument.
Aphasia	Inability to express oneself through speech, writing, or gestures, or to understand spoken or written language. The impairment can be due to injury or disease of the brain centers.
Assessment	Identifying an individual's level of knowledge, skill, or need through the process of gathering data in order to clarify and verify problems and make decisions.
Auditory Perception	Identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory data received through the ear.
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence refers to the interpersonal skills and attitudes that enable people to appreciate the differences and similarities within and among people and cultures. Culturally competent approaches recognize the cultural grounding of the teacher's views, behavior, and approaches.
Diagnosis	The process of identifying the nature of a situation (e.g., a learning disability).
Dyscalculia	Inability to do simple mathematics.
Dysgraphia	Severe handwriting difficulties often due to poor fine motor coordination.
Dyslexia	Severe reading problem in a person who has adequate vision, hearing, and intelligence. Dyslexia is not attributable to environmental causes or other handicapping conditions but is thought to be related to a dysfunction in the central nervous system.
Input	Taking in information.
Integration	Converting information to meaning.
Learning Difference	Term that represents the fact that people learn differently in ways that include, but can go beyond, learning style.
Learning Difficulty	Term that encompasses problems in learning, some of which may be learning disabilities and some which may not.

Learning Style	People have preferred modes of learning, including auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic.
Linguistically Appropriate	Curriculum, instruction, and interaction which recognize that people use language in different ways based on cultural and personal communication styles, and are also sensitive to the needs of those people for whom English is not a native language.
Memory	Ability to store and retrieve information.
Neuropsychology	Field of study that relates what is known about the functioning of the brain to what is understood about the behavior of people. The field "seeks to define the role of the brain in thought and action by studying empirically the behavioral phenomena associated with the neural changes induced by injury, disease, or dysfunction of the nervous system in children and adults" (Wong, 1991).
Output	Expressing information.
Perception	The act, process, or faculty of receiving stimuli, data, and information. How people perceive things can vary greatly from person to person, and can be influenced by such factors as age, culture, and gender.
Perseveration	Inappropriate, uncontrollable repetition of words, phrases, or gestures.
Reasoning	Intellectual process of working through information by inferring from fact or logic.
Remediation	Instruction designed to help students with learning disabilities develop basic academic and life skills. Remediation is distinct from accommodation.
Sequencing	Ability to order objects, events, and ideas in succession.
Social Context	The learners' lives outside of the classroom. This includes their culture, the social roles that they perform, and their social networks in the home, community, or at work.
Spatial Organization	Ability to organize and interpret nonverbal visual and auditory stimuli.
Tactile/Kinesthetic Perception	Awareness and sense of bodily movement, weight, resistance, and position.
Visual Perception	The processes of taking in and gaining meaning from nonsymbolic (size and color) and symbolic (written words, objects) visual stimuli.

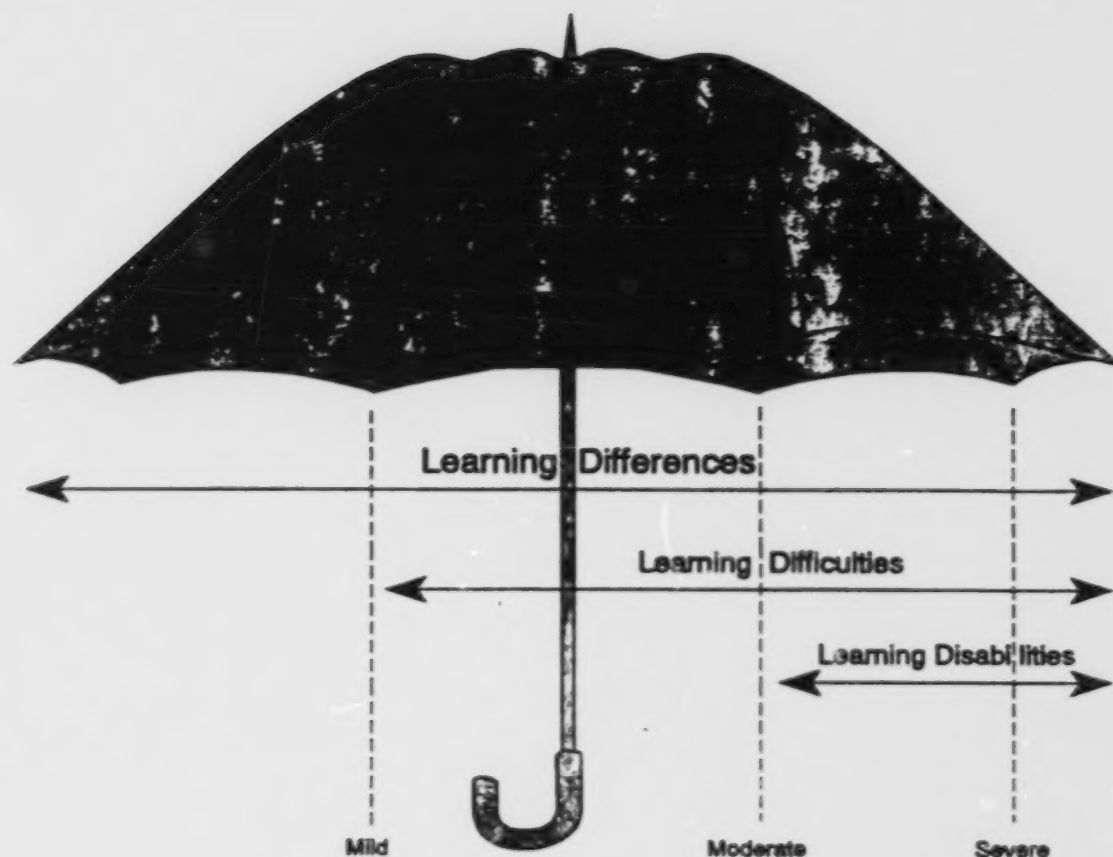
ADULTS FIRST AND LAST

M O T I V A T I O N	Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?
G O A L S	What are some educational goals adults have?
A T T I T U D E	What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?
A B I L I T Y	What strengths do adults bring to learning?
S O C I A L C U L T U R A L	What social and cultural factors affect learning?
L E A R N I N G	What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?

**VISUALIZING LEARNING DIFFERENCES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES,
AND LEARNING DISABILITIES**



CONTINUUM OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND DIFFICULTIES



DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

COMPONENTS OF DEFINITION

1. Refers to many different (heterogeneous) learning problems.
2. Presumed to be a basic dysfunction in the central nervous system.
3. May persist across the life span.
4. Occurs with varying degrees of severity.
5. Occurs across the intellectual range.
6. May impact several areas of adult life and functions.

BARRIERS

The barriers which restrict or prevent people from performing or participating and which are the focus of advocacy efforts often fall in the following categories:

structural	communication
social/attitudinal	economic
psychological	programmatic

A lot of overlap occurs between the different types of barriers. For example, one kind often causes another to exist.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS restrict or prevent a person from free and independent movement from one place to another.

Example: A flight of stairs can prevent a person in a wheelchair from entering a building.

SOCIAL/ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS represent attitudes or personal beliefs of members of our society that are based on prejudice regarding a particular disability or people with disabilities in general.

Example: A non-disabled person is hired for a job over a person with a disability even though that person's qualifications are equal to or better than the non-disabled person's.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS are barriers maintained by people with disabilities themselves. They exist when individuals have learned to believe that they are not capable.

Example: A person sees no point in going to school to learn a skill, because they do not think they would get hired for a job anyway.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS exist such that people cannot afford basics, cannot gain access to basic opportunities and are victimized by a coalition of unenlightened lawmakers and those with vested interests who are responsible for dependency producing public policies and allocation strategies.

Example: Persons with disabilities who seek to work face economic punishment.

PROGRAMMATIC BARRIERS exist when needs of people with disabilities are not taken into consideration in the planning of a new program or activity.

Example: Transportation, both state-wide and nation-wide, is not designed with persons with disabilities in mind.

Notice how one barrier ties with another and notice how most come from outside the person and may have very little or nothing to do with someone's disability.

Every individual would like to live their life as freely and independently as they can. But because of the barriers that exist in our society for a person with a disability, that is not always possible.

EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT TO A STUDENT

February 11, 1988

Dear Ron,

Here is the report on your testing. Basically, it says:

1. your verbal ability is good, with scores ranging from average to above-average,
2. because your use of words is so good, your reading can become much better,
3. as your reading gets better, your spelling can improve, too, and then your writing will go easier,
4. your reading problem is a kind of "dyslexia" based on difficulty breaking up a word into parts; this can be helped by working with a learning-therapist.

If I can be of further help, or can answer any questions you might have, please call. I will be away until the 22nd of February, but call then if you like, or have Sandra call with any questions.

Sincerely,

TEST INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT TO A TEACHER

Test Interpretations and Recommendations:

Joe obtained a Full Scale score of 86 on the WAIS-R which falls within the Low Average range of intelligence suggesting low average academic achievement. Joe's performance on the WAIS-R suggests that it may require more time than the average student to attain learned academic skills. Verbal abilities appear to be weaker relative to nonverbal abilities, which fall within the average range of functioning. No significant relative strengths or weaknesses are noted among individual subtests.

Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test suggests fairly average skills in this area. Figures were drawn with no errors.

Reading Recognition skills were developed to a 5.8 grade level equivalence based upon test results. Skills appear to be below average for age. Joe seems to have great difficulties decoding new words. Reading Comprehension skills appear to be below average for age also. A 7.3 grade equivalence is noted. Math Calculation skills seem to be developed to a grade equivalence of 8.5. This is an area of relative strength for Joe compared with other academic areas. Joe was able to compute basic mathematical calculations. Work is still needed in the areas of decimals, percentiles, negative numbers, and algebraic computations. Math Reasoning skills appear fairly commensurate with other areas of achievement. A 6.4 grade equivalence is noted.

Based upon the results of this assessment, it is suggested that it may require excess time to master academic skills introduced to Joe. Joe may also require more time to complete assignments in class that are timed or tests which are timed. It is recommended that Joe be given extra time to complete timed tasks. It is also recommended that skills be continuously developed until teachers recommend Joe is prepared to take the G.E.D. exam. Joe will benefit from repetition of instruction in gaining learned skills. He may also benefit from a visual instruction approach rather than an auditory approach and a more concrete method rather than an abstract. Building skills in a step-by-step fashion as opposed to a more holistic approach may also benefit.

If further information is requested, contact this examiner at 555-1234.

Signed,

MATRIX:
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Student Classification/ Status	Has Learning Disability	Does Not Have Learning Disability
Identified		
Not Identified		

SCENARIO

KAREN W.

Karen W., a 55-year-old homemaker and mother of four, is a second-generation German-American who lives in a blue-collar suburb of Pittsburgh. Recently widowed, her life has changed dramatically since her husband died of lung cancer last year. Now that her daughters are all married and have moved to other parts of the country with their young families, she faces the prospect of managing alone the financial affairs that had always been handled by her husband. This new responsibility involves taking on tasks such as paying the bills, balancing the checkbook, figuring taxes, and budgeting money.

Karen has always considered herself an organized person, someone who gets things done, and a motivator to her children — each graduated from college and went on to get a good job. She is a creative storyteller, an accomplished seamstress, and she likes to bake pies without following a recipe. Ever since she was in high school, where she dropped out in the eleventh grade because she had to help support her family, Karen has avoided math-related tasks and consistently refused her husband's many offers to help her improve her math skills. Her husband's family and friends from her church have offered to help her get back on her feet, but she wants to be able to take care of herself.

Despite initial resistance, Karen was persuaded by her brother-in-law's admonitions about her financial affairs, and is now determined to obtain a job that will pay the bills and somehow utilize her 35 years of experience as a homemaker and mother. With prodding from her youngest daughter, she scheduled an appointment with an employment counselor at the local community college. There she took a battery of pre-employment tests. The reading and math assessments showed mixed results. Although her reading rate is slow, she has satisfactory comprehension because she can analyze words into their phonetic parts and uses her language skills for figuring out words from context. The math portion was more difficult for her. She has no problem with simple computation, but she has a difficult time aligning numbers properly and often reverses numbers. She also has difficulty solving multi-step problems and in forming a mental picture of a problem. Estimating numbers such as the dimensions for a room or the sale price of an item have always posed a challenge for her, as well.

Karen would like to obtain her GED diploma because she now regrets not having finished high school. The interview with the employment counselor also convinced her that she cannot expect to get a decent-paying job without a diploma.

SCENARIO FOCUS QUESTIONS

PERSONAL/SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING:

Identify aspects of the adult learner's context — including motivations, goals, culture, and class — that the instructor should consider when planning for instruction. Also examine where the learner's skills are shown outside the classroom setting and where these skills are likely to be tested out; the importance of this is to connect learning to where the learner wants to use it.

LEARNING STRENGTHS:

Identify indicators of learning preferences, strengths, and possible learning difficulties, and discuss implications for instructors.

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

Identify strategies used to accommodate for learning difficulties. How can these be integrated into instruction so that the learner can build on strengths?

ADULT ROLES

HOME

WORK

COMMUNITY

CLASSROOM

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENTS (To Be Completed for Session Two)

During the period between Sessions One and Two, you will work with one of your students to learn more about what they want out of the learning process, their strengths, learning challenges that they have faced and how they have accommodated for areas of weakness, their support system, and where they will apply and refine the skills they develop while in your program.

This exercise has six goals. It will:

- (1) Help you see beyond what often may seem to be a set of problems (or, as some would say, "deficits").
- (2) Help you focus (or remain focused) on the students' goals.
- (3) Enable you to work with students to modify your approach to instruction in a manner that addresses their strengths, goals, and particular needs.
- (4) Provide you with a sense of them as a whole person and enable you, if necessary, to help the students identify and harness their own strengths.
- (5) Provide information that we will use in Sessions Two and Three.
- (6) Provide you with an experience (and model) for new ways to work with students in a learner-centered manner. (In order to assist you in this work, we have prepared a discussion guide and series of discussion questions, which you may use during your interview [H-16b-c].)

Adult educators work with a variety of students. Your approach to the interim task may have to vary with: (a) the type of student and (b) the type of setting you work in. Students who entered the program on their own volition may respond more openly than students who entered through the pressure of a social worker or family member. Students who participate in the program voluntarily may respond more openly than those who entered the program because some official mandated their participation (e.g., in order to receive welfare benefits) or those who are incarcerated. While your tactics may vary in each case, your strategy and goal should remain the same:

- Strategy — establishing trust so that you can interview students.
- Goal — viewing your students as whole people and understanding the diverse social and cultural contexts that they live in.

While your tactics may vary, three factors may help establish trust: (1) a clear explanation of your goals, (2) an understanding of the learners' skepticism, and (3) respect for the learner.

Remember, returning to school is a heroic act for many learners — particularly for those who have learning disabilities. Adult learners are likely to drop out again if they do not feel comfortable in the classroom environment and if their goals and needs are not being met.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Two.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTERVIEW BEHAVIOR

Conduct the interview in a setting that provides some privacy and breaks down the distance between you and the person you are interviewing. You may decide to meet over coffee, tea, or a soft drink.

1. Be a respectful, responsive, and active listener.
2. Ask questions and elicit information in a warm, non-threatening, non-judgmental way.
3. Remain sensitive to "touchy" areas. Don't press the person you are interviewing if he or she says "no" without an explanation. If the person you are interviewing asks you to back off, do so.
4. Acknowledge the adult's feelings.
5. Respect confidentiality.
6. Do not cut off the person you are interviewing because he or she is not following your order of chosen questions.
7. Permit the person you are interviewing to reframe questions.
8. If the person you are interviewing has a different cultural background from your own, be conscious of the fact that culture affects *your* approach and responses as well as those of the person you are interviewing.
9. Let the person you are interviewing know what you will do with the interview. (If you are just using it for the assignment, let him or her know that; if you will also use this to adapt your approaches to instruction, let the student know that as well.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introduce the first set of questions by stating, "In order to help me become a better teacher, I would like to know more about you." (Also make it clear that if they think you are asking questions that are too private, they should tell you.)

- Tell me about yourself. What are the most important things that I should know about you?
- Tell me some of the things that you like to do most.
- Tell me some of the things that you don't like doing.
- I am interested in your goals. How did you decide to come to this [name of your program]? What do you hope to get out of participating in the program?
- Where will you use these new skills (or knowledge or confidence) and in what way? At home? At work? With your friends? In the community?

Introduce the next set of questions by stating that in order to decide how to more effectively work with them, you want to know more about how they learn and work.

- What did you like about school?
- How do you prefer to study or think things out or work on things? Where? When?
 - alone
 - with someone else
 - thinking or talking out loud
 - in a quiet room or place
- Think about the work we do here. What things make it difficult for you to study? To learn new material?
- If you think about people who have taught you (in and out of school), who helped you most? Why?
- What things should I do to help you achieve your goals?

Students will be asked to respond orally. You may take notes. Tape record the oral discussion only if you have asked the student's permission and he or she is comfortable with the idea. Use your notes or the tape recorded interview to summarize your findings.

SESSION ONE EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify):
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was

(too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)

2. The small group activities were

(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

3. The ideas and activities presented were

(dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)

4. The mix of activities used to present the material was

(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was

(inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

HANDOUTS

SESSION TWO

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were
(vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)
3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)
4. The content of the training will be
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
5. The theory and information presented were
(insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the

a. printed materials

(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

b. overhead transparencies

(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

c. video

(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

2. The technical quality of the printed materials was

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. The technical quality of the overheads was

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. The video added to the overall value of the workshop

(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (a great deal)

5. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment

(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:

Overall Comments

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

- 113

REMINDER!

Session Two of the Workshop on **LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES**

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Please remember to bring the following:

1. Completed Home-Task Worksheets
2. Materials from Session One

Please complete and return this portion to:

☐ Yes, I will attend Session Two of the workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches*.

Name: _____ Telephone: (____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

(City) (State) (Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION TWO AGENDA

- OBJECTIVES:** By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:
- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
 - 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
 - 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
 - 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
 - 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

- AGENDA:**
- I. Introductions/Workshop Overview
 - II. Review of Session One
 - III. Review of Interim Task Assignment
 - BREAK
 - IV. Planning for Learning
 - Instructional Process
 - Video Demonstration
 - Conducting a Needs Assessment
 - V. Interim Task Assignment
 - VI. Evaluation, Wrap-Up

PERSON SEARCH PART 2

1. _____ Planned a party within the last six months.
2. _____ Has a student who rarely comes to class.
3. _____ Found out that a student enjoys reading maps and charts.
4. _____ Took your car into the auto repair shop recently for a 50,000 mile servicing.
5. _____ Recommended a tutor for a student.
6. _____ Developed a set of learning objectives based on a student's needs.
7. _____ Recognized that a student has difficulty understanding verbal directions.
8. _____ Planned a family trip.
9. _____ Had difficulty understanding a student's handwriting.
10. _____ Wears eyeglasses.
11. _____ Participated in a market research survey.
12. _____ Spoke privately with a student about his or her learning needs.
13. _____ Received a letter/interim report from one of your children's teachers.
14. _____ Have identified a specific area in which you could individually work with a student.
15. _____ Had a parent/teacher conference.
16. _____ Took cooking lessons.
17. _____ Discovered that a student prefers to work in a group rather than independently.
18. _____ Is on a diet.
19. _____ Has a student who is a carpenter.
20. _____ Returned to school as an adult.

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW PART I

In Session One we identified four factors adult educators need to consider when assessing student learning needs.

- **Goals and Interests**
- **Learning Strengths**
 - **Learning Difficulties**
 - **Accommodation Strategies**

With a partner, discuss the questions below and write your answers in the space provided.

1. Why is knowing about a student's goals and interests important?

2. How can you determine learning strengths?

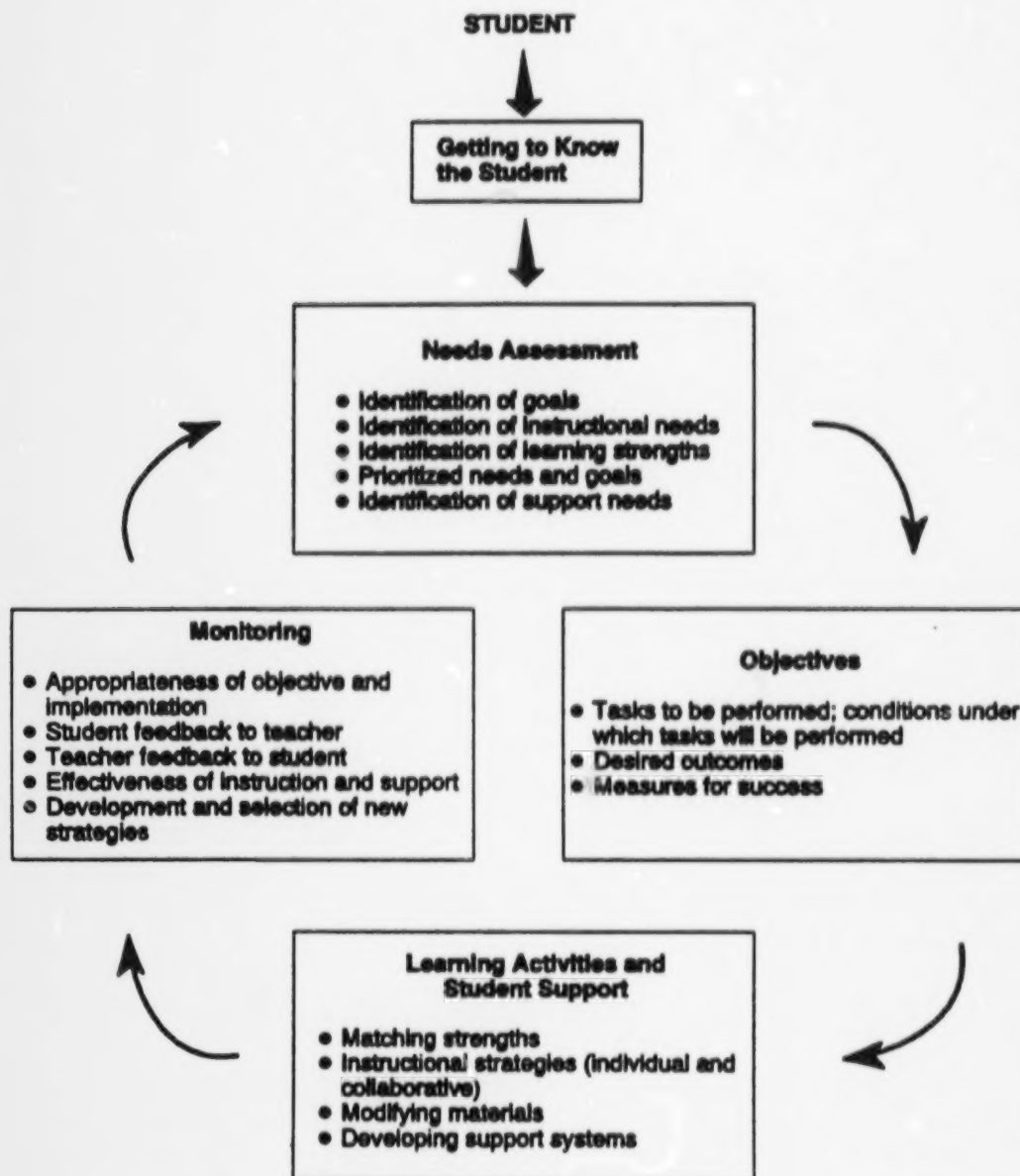
3. What kinds of accommodations might students with learning difficulties use?

4. What are the implications of learning strengths and accommodations for instruction for adults with learning difficulties?

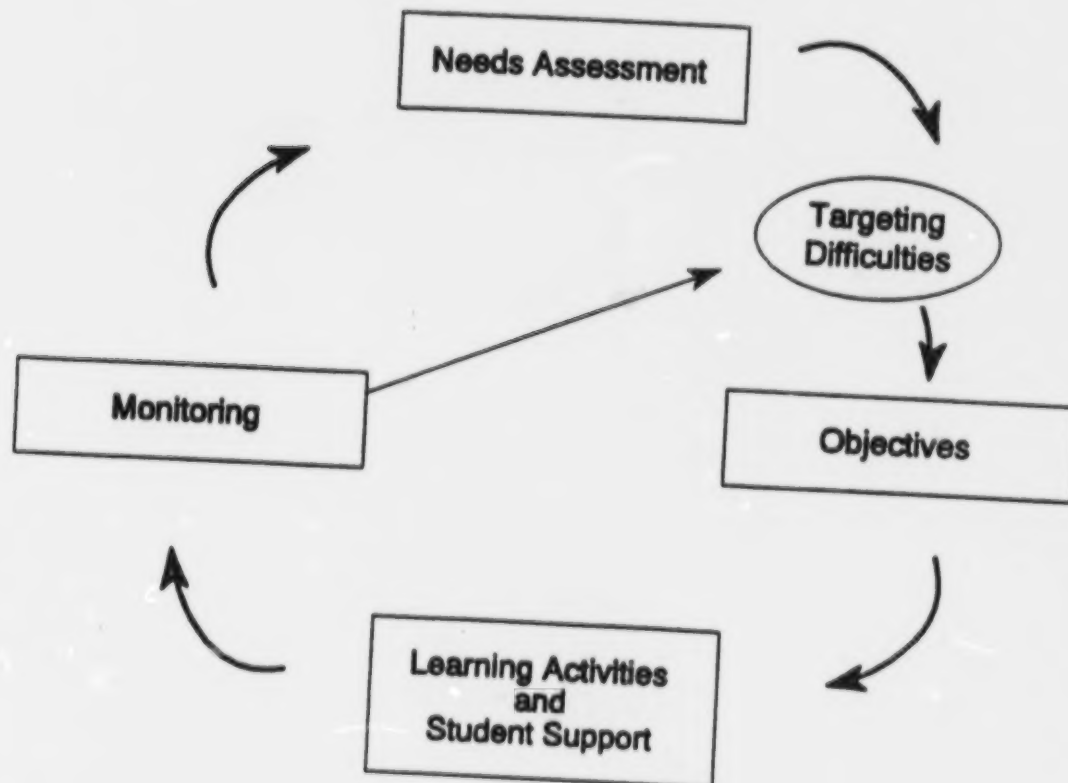
INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW PART II

- I. Using the completed Interim Task Assignment packet (H-16a-c) your group will discuss the following questions:
1. What did you find out about your student's strengths (or at least what they like to do and feel comfortable doing)?
 2. If you observed any accommodation strategies, please note them and discuss their implications for instruction.
 3. What were the student's attitudes and reactions toward learning?
 4. Discuss problems encountered with the use of the informal interview to determine learning strengths. Brainstorm possible solutions.
- II. After all members of your group have finished Part I, choose one student to profile. Briefly describe student's goals and interests, patterns of strengths and learning difficulties and any accommodation strategies that they may be using. Have a volunteer from the group record this information on T-L for presentation to the entire group.
- Be prepared to discuss possible patterns of strengths and their implications for instruction. Suggest other information that would be useful and methods that might be used to obtain this information.

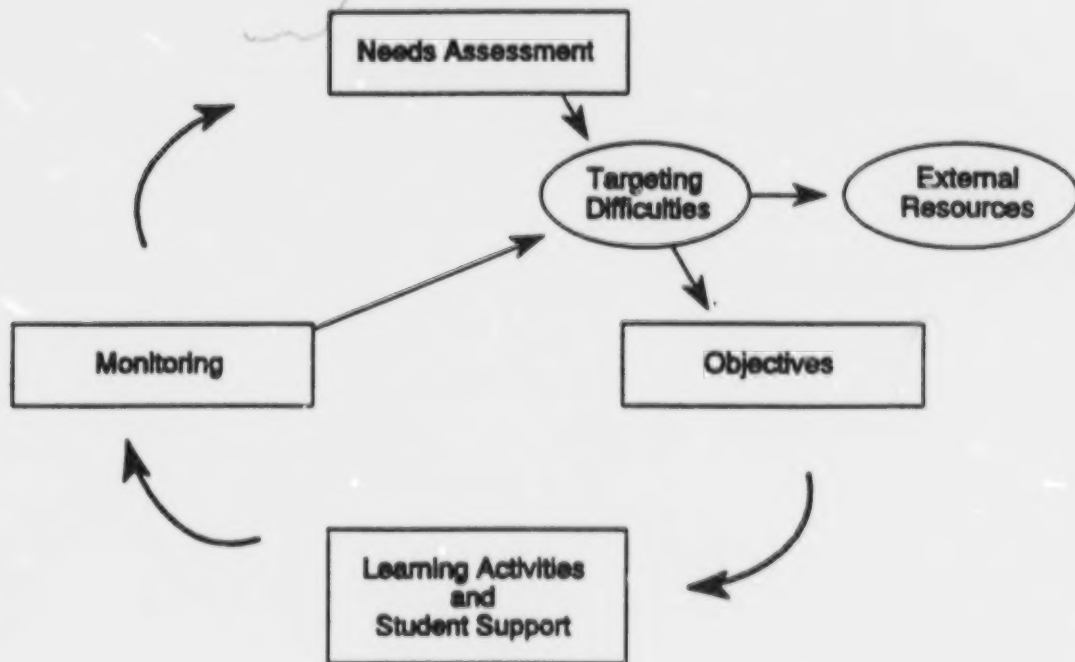
PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 1)



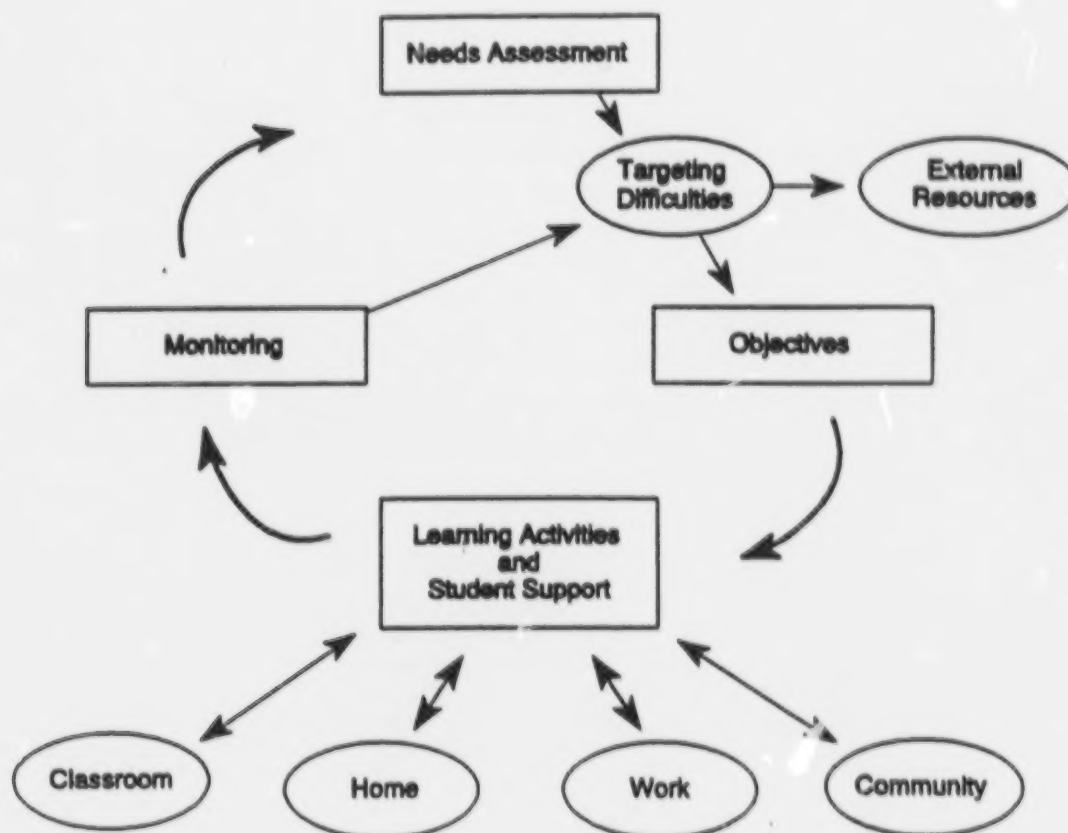
PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 2)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 3)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 4)



VIDEO FOCUS CHART

GOALS

LEARNING STRENGTHS

LEARNING STYLE

NEEDS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

A Student-Centered Approach

This model is designed to provide teachers with a student-centered approach to determining learner needs. Both student and teacher observations about what the learner needs are important to this process. At this point, the focus is not on what *can* be done but on what *should* be done from the perspective of the learner.

Adult educators work in a variety of environments. Your approach to the needs assessment (as well as planning and monitoring tasks) may vary with: (a) the number of students you work with, (b) the amount of time you have to devote to planning, and (c) the culture and unique nature of your program and of each student. While face-to-face dialogue is preferable, some teachers may have to develop alternative mechanisms for engaging students. Alternatives may include:

- Surveys that provide students with an opportunity to define their needs *combined* with an opportunity for students to confirm a draft needs assessment as both addressing their goals and making sense to them, or
- Working with groups of students in a manner that combines written surveys with dialogue among students and between students and the teacher.

Whatever method you choose, make sure that the learners define their needs, shape the program, and confirm your conclusions. In addition, make sure that you are listening carefully for the learners' perceptions of what they need.

Before beginning the assessment, try to make the student as comfortable as possible. Lead into the assessment through more casual conversation. Meeting over coffee can also defuse some anxiety.

The student and the teacher collaborate on answering the following questions:

1. ***What are the student's goals? Where will those goals be used and tested out?***
(Possible probe: What do you, the student, hope to get out of the program [e.g., speak English, get a better job working with computers]?)

-
2. ***What are the student's learning strengths?***
(Possible probe: What were your favorite subjects in school? Why?)
3. ***What is the student's learning style?***
(Possible probes: How do you prefer to study? Work things out? Work on things?)
4. ***What are the student's needs?***
(Possible probes: What things make it difficult for you to study or learn material? What things make it easier?)
5. ***Based on steps one through four, what skills, information, and experience does the student need to achieve his/her goals?***
(Possible probes: What can you do to help achieve your goals? Be as specific as possible. [i.e., study three hours a week, advocate for myself by letting teacher and others know what I need to learn]; What can I do to help you achieve your goals? Please be as specific as you can. [i.e., tutoring, provide more visuals aids, tape record/video tape classes].

NOTE: H-16a-c (Session One Interim Task) provides valuable information for implementing this student-centered model of assessing learner needs.

ACTIVITY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL
A Student-Centered Approach

1. What are the student's goals? Where will those goals be used and tested out?

2. What are the student's learning strengths?

3. What is the student's learning style?

4. What are the student's needs?

5. Based on steps one through four, what skills, information, and experiences does the student need to achieve his/her goals?

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT

(To be Completed for Session Three)

During the period between Sessions Two and Three, you will work with the same student you interviewed for the first Interim Task.

The purposes of the Interim Task are threefold:

- *To find out more about your student's learning strengths and needs* through additional discussion with the student and through your observation of the student in class (and, if at all possible, outside the classroom setting).
- To work with your student to address *one goal* that you both would like to see the student make progress on.
- *To try out an adaptive strategy* with the student that: (1) works off the students' strengths, (2) addresses the student's goal, (3) adjusts for the student's learning difficulties, and (4) makes sense to the student given his or her context. For example, if the student learns better visually, teach visually; if he or she learns better through an auditory or tactile-kinesthetic approach, teach to those strengths. If the student seems to have difficulties in these areas, use adaptive strategies (e.g., if she or he has difficulty focusing on lines, let the student read with a ruler; if a student has difficulty writing with a pen or pencil, have that individual compose on a computer; if there is a problem with spelling, show the student how to use spell check on the computer).

You should aim to be a flexible, adaptive teacher and to reflectively modify your teaching through your interaction with your student. The assignment can be completed without your using any specialized tools. It is important to utilize the information you collected after Session One to inform your time with the student for this assignment. To assist you, we have prepared a focus chart for you to record relevant information from your interactions with your student.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Three.

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT TWO
PLANNING GUIDE

STUDENT GOALS:

LEARNING STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS:

MODIFICATIONS YOU INTEND TO MAKE WITH STUDENT:

LIKELY SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:

INDICATORS OF CHANGE:

TEACHING ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES



TOOLKIT

GENERAL POINTS

- Be learner centered.
- Monitor progress regularly.
- Focus on strengths.
- Build opportunities for active learning.
- Involve families wherever possible and appropriate.
- Be positive, encouraging, and respectful.
- Employ a customized mix of instructional tools that work for particular learners.

PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

- Enable learners to reflect on the nature of their needs and strengths, as well as on how their needs and strengths affect their life and learning.
- Collaborate with learners. Build on their strengths and create adaptive strategies based on individual needs.
- Collaboratively establish expectations: teacher/learner, learner/teacher, learner/self.
- Connect objectives and methods to the learner's personal and academic goals.
- Develop a short-term plan together, and meet frequently to monitor progress.
- When a new facet of a learner's functioning becomes apparent, discuss it openly and plainly with the learner.

BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

- Capitalize on the learner's strengths. (For example, if the learner has strong listening skills, present material orally.) Teaching to strengths helps learners accommodate to weaker areas.
- Expect progress and success, but don't place unrealistic expectations on yourself or your learners. Learning new ways to teach and to learn takes time.

- Provide opportunities for success every day through positive learning experiences and exercises learners can do.
- Develop learner self-knowledge regarding: (1) their needs and strengths and (2) how they think and accommodate.
- Reframe errors as opportunities to learn.
- Support and build in opportunities for the learner to make choices and shape the learning situation.
- Pay careful attention to self-concept enhancement when working with adults with learning disabilities.
- Look for opportunities to praise.
- Establish a warm and friendly atmosphere appropriate for adult learning.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Teach anxiety and stress management techniques.
- Develop learner support groups.
- Be a sensitive teacher who treats learners with respect and dignity.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

General

- Break down tasks into small chunks and present them in a paced, sequential manner. Make lists and prioritize items.
- Use a variety of short assignments.
- Provide structure and orderliness. Avoid unrelated comments and excessive talk about other topics. Changing from one subject to another and back again is distracting to some learners. A slow transition from one idea to another can be necessary, and automatic transition should not be assumed.
- Provide closure and logical transitions when moving from one skill or task to another.
- Provide frequent feedback.
- Capitalize on the learner's strengths and teach to them (e.g., use visual modalities with visual learners).
- Use as many modalities (sight, touch, speech, hearing) as possible when presenting material. Making information available through different senses helps learners become active learners who use their strongest channels to get information.
- Employ active learning techniques.
- Connect learning to the learner context as often as possible. This can make abstract concepts more understandable.
- Teach new ideas and concepts in as concrete a way as possible. It is often easier for adults with learning disabilities to learn the theory after its practical application.

- Help the learner visualize material in order to better understand what is being presented. (Visual aids can include overhead projectors, slides, films, chalkboards, flip charts, computer graphics, illustrations, and graphic organizers for reading.)
- Use color whenever possible. Visual impact is sharper in color, and color coding can be an aid to learning.
- Provide opportunities for touching and handling materials that relate to ideas presented. This can strengthen learning.
- Provide opportunities for preview, rehearsal, repetition, review, and overlearning.
- Give simple, concise directions. Many learners benefit from directions which are broken down into steps, with one step presented at a time.
- Make announcements of changes in the schedule, assignments, or upcoming examinations both orally and in written form.
- For some learners, it may be useful for the instructor to speak at an even speed.
- Emphasize and announce important points. If there is more than one point, you might say, "The first point is. . .", and "The second point is. . .", etc. Points could be emphasized in writing as well.
- Make frequent eye contact, if it is culturally appropriate. When appropriate, this helps to maintain attention and encourages participation.
- Encourage learners who need to sit in the front of the room where they will be able to hear and see well.
- Provide learners with an environment as free from distractions as possible.
- Provide study carrels or other areas of quiet for learners who may need privacy and some degree of freedom from distraction.
- Create safe and engaging ways to practice and adopt skills.
- Be sensitive to the fact that some learners are very self-conscious about talking in front of groups. Ask these learners questions with short answers, and try not to interrupt the learner once he/she has begun to respond.

Reading Techniques

Provide reading instruction that is imaginative and engaging. Aim at developing independent, fluent readers who are confident in their decoding skills and who will be able to comprehend written information and texts at home, work, and in the community. While reading instruction should be individualized, it need not be delivered as one-to-one instruction. (When the teacher-student ratio is high, group work can provide more opportunities for teacher-directed instruction.) Focus teaching and coaching on four goals: (1) decoding, (2) vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency, (3) reading strategy, and (4) writing.

- Remember that the important skill is creating meaning from print and that different approaches (e.g., phonics, whole language) work for different students.

- Use engaging materials (e.g., article on issue that is important to the learner, plays, job-related materials).
- Use collaborative efforts (which may include the teacher reading out loud) to create understanding and meaning if the learner cannot read the entire text.
- Use a directed-reading approach for all assignments involving reading (across all content areas). Review any new vocabulary. Establish a purpose for reading, and provide a focus in order to enhance attention and understanding.
- Focus on words that have a great deal of meaning to the learner or that are in the learner's daily environment.
- Build vocabulary and speech sound discrimination through semantic maps, phonics identification, conversation, word games, tongue twisters, etc.
- Employ strategies using the whole language approach (e.g., ask the learner to describe in detail a job he/she has held. Write down exactly what the learner says and use it as a reading exercise for sequencing).
- In order to teach left to right orientation for reading and to correct a tendency towards word reversals, have the learner draw a line under each column in a newspaper article. This is an eye training exercise, and can be used to improve reading speed as well.
- If the learner cannot track well, encourage him/her to use a finger or a ruler to guide his/her eyes.
- If the learner confuses letters, focus in on the confusion. For example, have learners circle each "b" in a row of a piece of reading material as quickly as possible. This can be used for b/d confusion, as well as m/n, was/saw, etc. If you do this, focus on only one pair in a session.
- Read an article to the learner while the learner follows along. Discuss what was read by having the learner paraphrase or answer various questions. Ask factual questions before inferential and predictive questions.
- Adapt informational materials to the learner's reading level so content can be learned while reading skills are being practiced.
- If decoding is a problem, work on word parts, reverse word attack, or word comparisons. The teacher may want to start with words in the learner's environment since environment provides repetition.
- If learners have problems with abstract concepts, teach them to visualize what they are reading.
- If comprehension is a problem, have learners collect words and then learn to use them. (Dictionaries, which can be difficult to use, should be used with caution.)

Math Techniques

Focus math instruction on the use of mathematics in everyday life (e.g., solving problems at home, using math at work, estimating prices in stores). A functional approach may accommodate for poor math facts while teaching basic concepts. Lessons can emphasize the practical applications of math concepts and a mathematical approach to problem solving.

- Employ calculators to enable learners to focus on concepts and problem solving.
- Use manipulatives, concrete models, diagrams, maps, graphs, and so forth, whenever possible to make abstract ideas seem more concrete. Have learners create these aids whenever possible.
- Break each math concept down into a series of steps. Work through every problem in stages.
- Use problems that learners will use in their lives.
- Encourage learners to make predictions about the outcome of problems.
- Teach learners to make estimates by rounding off numbers.
- Use graph paper to accommodate dysgraphia (severe handwriting difficulties).

GROUP LEARNING SITUATIONS

Group learning and discussion is a valuable tool for adults with learning disabilities. Research indicates that many adults with learning disabilities rate their peers as being the people most helpful to them.

- Help learners to get in touch with other adults with learning disabilities, obtain a speaker, etc.
- Discuss the process of learning with learning groups: how it feels, what works, what doesn't, and why.
- Use groups as support groups, collaborative groups, problem-solving groups, and learning communities.
- Encourage the initiation of self-help groups. Evidence supports the benefits of being in a support group of adults with learning disabilities. Learners can share frustrations, learn coping strategies, ease the feeling of being alone, overcome personal problems, share successes, and learn from others, and possibly plan outings together.

STUDY SKILLS/LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

- Summarize presentations and readings and provide opportunities to rehearse activities. This will assist adults with learning disabilities who have difficulty bringing things to closure.
- Teach useful study skills like listening, time management, test taking, materials organization, and so forth.
- Teach memory techniques such as mnemonics.

- Teach organization of materials such as chunking and clustering.
- Help learners learn to skim and survey by looking for clues in boldface type, underlined and italicized words, lists, and so forth.
- Openly discuss learning strategies with the learner. Learning *how* to learn is an important part of the process.
- Help learners learn how to break tasks down into manageable chunks.
- Encourage learners to seek help in the learning process. Notetakers, tutors, tape recorders, computers, and other people and instruments can be very helpful in capitalizing on strengths.

SOCIAL SKILLS TECHNIQUES

- When learners raise personal problems, help them reflect on what they can learn from the experience, and to recognize their ability to have control of the situation.
- If the learner feels left out of a group situation, help him/her to evaluate why this is and how to solve the problem.
- Teach strategies for accepting and giving creative criticism.

EQUIPMENT

- Employ word processors to address dysgraphia or the need to visualize letters each time one writes.
- Employ spell checkers to address spelling problems.
- Employ tape recorders to accommodate for writing problems.
- Employ calculators and spreadsheets to facilitate computation.
- Employ computers for planning.
- Choose computer programs that are user-friendly.

CAUTIONS

- Be very careful not to mistake language and/or cultural differences for signs of a learning disability.
- Adapt all strategies to the personal, linguistic, and cultural needs and background of the learner. Some strategies are appropriate for some learners; others are not. Be aware of who you are teaching.
- Many of these strategies are simply good teaching strategies, and can be used with many populations.
- In the area of teaching social skills, be especially aware of possible cultural differences between the teacher and the learner.

SOURCES USED

- Adult Learning and Literacy Clearinghouse (1990). *Instructional Strategies for Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Alley, G. & Deshler, D. (1979). *Teaching the Learning Disabled Adolescent: Strategies and Methods*. Denver, CO: Love Publishing Co.
- Bingman, M.B. (1989). *Learning Differently: Meeting the Needs of Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Knoxville, TN: Center for Literacy Studies.
- Cooper, R. "Literacy Tutor Training: How Learning Disabilities Affect Reading, Spelling, and Writing." Presentation at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, Charlotte, NC, September 27, 1993.
- Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (1991). *Bringing Literacy Within Reach: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Ottawa, Ontario.
- Podhajski, B. "Model Program to Promote Family Literacy By Teaching Adult Basic Education Tutors How to Identify and Instruct Adults with Learning Disabilities." Presentation at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, Charlotte, NC, September 27, 1993.
- Ross-Gordon, J.M. (1989). *Adults with Learning Disabilities: An Overview for the Adult Educator*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Weisel, L.P. (1993). *Creating Services that Meet the Needs of Adults with LD*. OH: The TLP Group.
- Zigmond, N. (1990). "Rethinking Secondary School Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities." *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 23, 1-22.

SESSION TWO EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify):
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was
(too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)
2. The small group activities were
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
3. The ideas and activities presented were
(dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)
4. The mix of activities used to present the material was
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was
(inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were
(vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)
3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)
4. The content of the training will be
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
5. The theory and information presented were
(insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the
 - a. printed materials
(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)
 - b. overhead transparencies
(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)
2. The technical quality of the printed materials was
(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)
3. The technical quality of the overheads was
(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)
4. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:**Overall Comments**

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

-
2. What do you think were the weakest features of this workshop?

 3. What suggestions do you have for improving this training?

 4. Which techniques, ideas, or activities will you apply in your own classroom?

HANDOUTS

SESSION THREE

REMINDER!

Session Three of the Workshop on **LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES**

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Please remember to bring the following:

1. Completed Home-Task Worksheets
2. Materials from Sessions One and Two

Please complete and return this portion to:

☐ Yes, I will attend Session Two of the workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches*.

Name: _____ Telephone: (____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION THREE AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of Session Three, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

- I. Introductions/Workshop Overview
- II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration
- III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task
- BREAK
- IV. Planning for Learning
 - Targeting Areas of Need
 - Developing a Learning Plan
- V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy
- VI. Accessing and Using Resources
 - Potential Resources
 - Accommodations
- VII. How Do You Make It Happen?
- VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes
- IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

PERSON SEARCH PART 3

1. _____ Referred a student to a vocational rehabilitation counselor.
2. _____ Worked with another teacher in planning a lesson for students.
3. _____ Mentored or coached another teacher.
4. _____ Was mentored or coached by another teacher.
5. _____ Changed doctors within the last year.
6. _____ Experimented with a new recipe.
7. _____ Held individual conferences with students.
8. _____ Tried out a new instructional strategy.
9. _____ Provided students with a list of child care agencies in the community.
10. _____ Requested a professional screening for a student.
11. _____ Kept an anecdotal record of students in the class.
12. _____ Developed a profile description of an ABE or ESL student.
13. _____ Modified a teaching approach based on student feedback.
14. _____ Agreed to listen to my child's "music."
15. _____ Took up a new hobby.
16. _____ Engaged in team teaching with another teacher in my program.
17. _____ Had a great insight about learning or teaching.
18. _____ Worked with a professional who really impressed me.
19. _____ Participated in a scavenger hunt before this workshop.
20. _____ Participated in a planning process.

REFLECTIVE TEACHING

Reflective practitioners: (1) think about what they are doing while they are doing it and (2) adapt their approaches to the needs of the situation. Reflective teachers do not use a cookbook approach to their work or treat all learners in the same way. Instead, they evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

For Discussion:

Think of a reflective and unreflective practitioner that you have worked with or observed (e.g., a cook or chef, a mechanic or plumber, a doctor or nurse, a teacher or tutor). Describe the characteristics of a reflective practitioner. What does this look like in the case of your work?

THE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

Teachers perform a form of research (investigation) when they observe, compare, contrast, and reflect on what happens in the classroom. Their research enables them to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their teaching. These investigations are necessary tools for the reflective practitioner.

Reflective teachers and tutors evaluate and monitor their approaches to their work. This involves making observations (watching what is happening), synthesizing data (sorting your observations), formulating preliminary hypotheses (making hunches), analyzing hypotheses (evaluating your hunches), and refining approaches.

For Discussion:

Think of a case in which you have practiced the above regarding your work with a student and describe it to your partner. (If you never have, think about what factors have prevented you from doing so and what could be done to change them. Share these observations with your partner.)

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Collaborative research in adult education builds upon the teacher as researcher. The research teams can come together in many forms: (a) university-based researchers and teachers, (b) teachers and their students, (c) teachers with other teachers, or (d) students with other students. In each case the participants collaboratively design, implement, and evaluate research. Collaborative research can contribute to staff development. (Susan Lytle and her colleagues call it "inquiry-based staff development.") Collaborative research can also be adapted to address the needs of students who learn differently. Students and teachers can work together to design, implement, and reflect on their findings. Their investigations expand the ability of teachers to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

For Discussion:

Reflective, learner-centered teachers work with students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor the use of appropriate tools for instruction. Explore with your partner how you can collaborate with your students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor your approaches. One partner should explore the question from the perspective of the teacher or tutor. The other partner should explore the issue from the perspective of a student.

The purpose of this review is for you to reflect on the strategies you tried out with your student(s) — what worked, what didn't — and to generate as a group ways to adapt your instruction.

- 147

TARGETING TOOL

Potential Problem Areas	<i>Difficulties</i>				
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile/ Kinesthetic	Organizational	Social/ Emotional
Input					
Integration					
Output					

INPUT, INTEGRATION, AND OUTPUT OF INFORMATION

INPUT ➡ INTEGRATION ➡ OUTPUT

INPUT	Seeing Hearing Touching Smelling Tasting	Involves reading Listening to discussion, lectures, tapes Hands-on experiences, observing
--------------	--	---



INTEGRATION	Sequencing Abstracting Organizing Memory	Organizing information into an order that makes sense, spelling Inferring meaning from words or recognition Relating new information to previously learned information Retaining information while attending and concentrating on it from a few minutes to more than 24 hours
--------------------	---	--

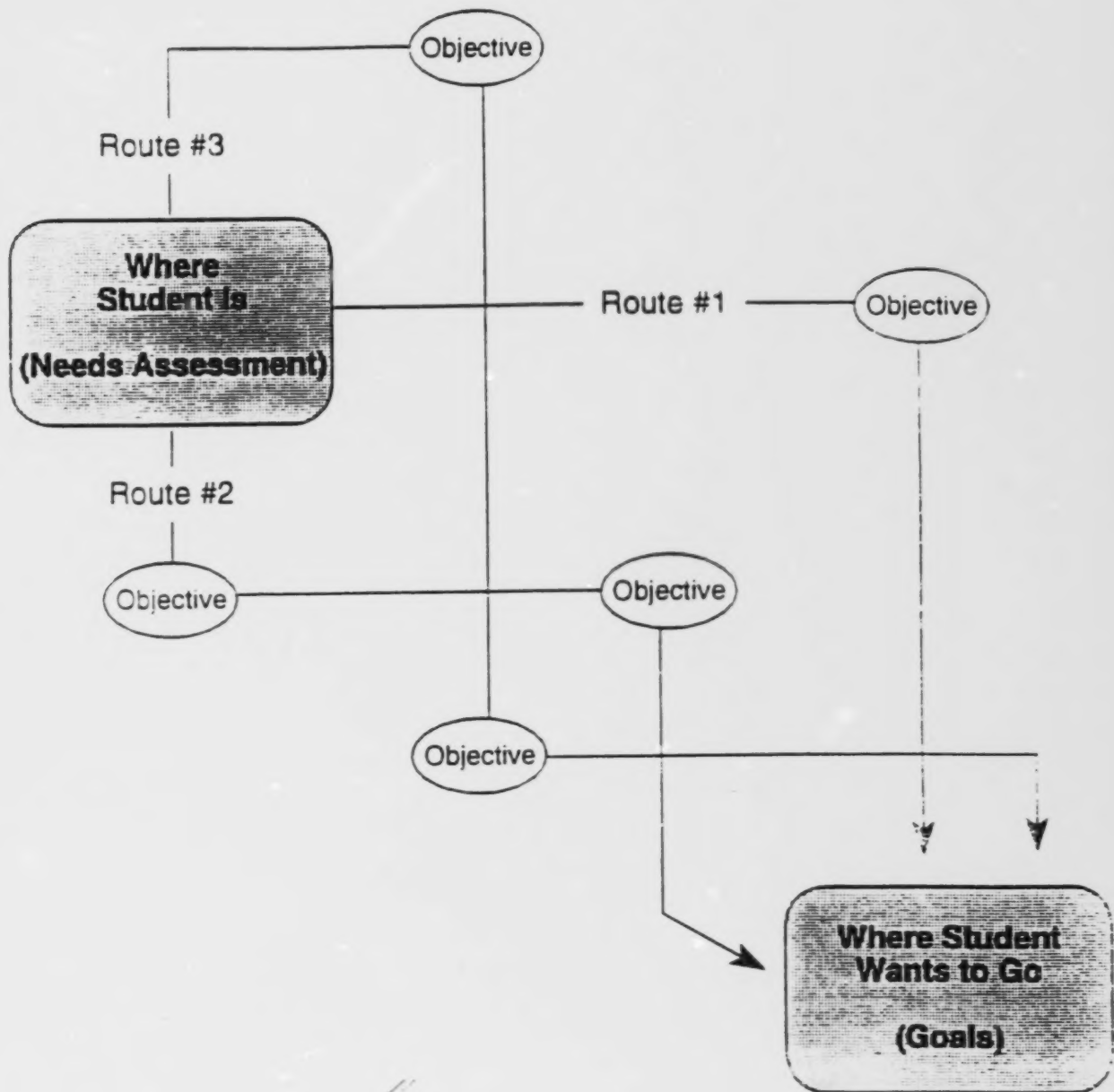


OUTPUT	Speaking Writing Gestures/ Facial Expressions	Involves giving oral reports, participating in discussion Writing reports/exams Understanding social cues/body language
---------------	---	---

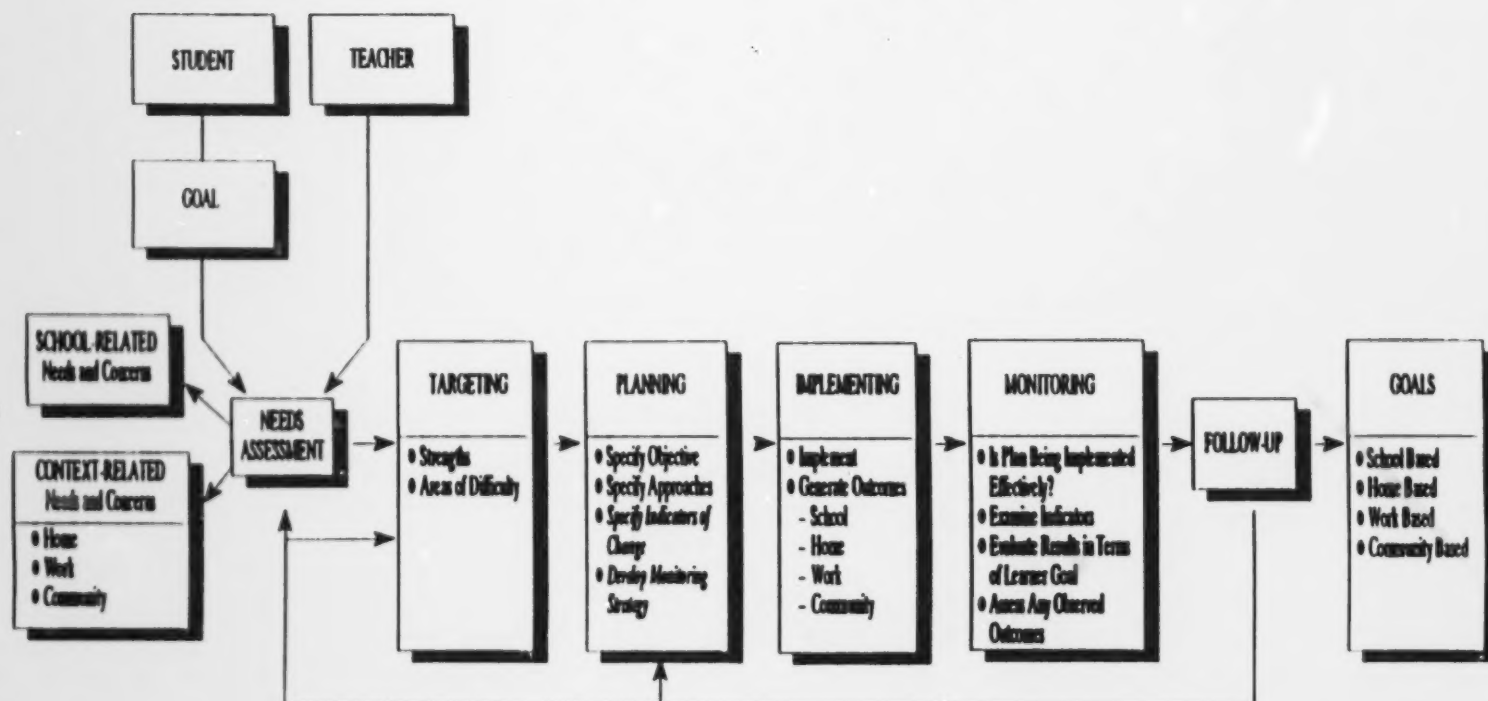
Goal	Learner Strengths	Learning Difficulties	Objective	Plan to Achieve Objective	Monitoring	Indicators of Achieving Objective
Passing the GED.	Visual & auditory learner. Attentive to environment. Highly motivated.	Poor vocabulary. Poor memory.	Increase vocabulary.	Focus vocabulary building measures on words that learner sees repeatedly at home, in community, at work (e.g., stop, exit, milk).	Have student read words and explain meaning. Ask student if plan is working.	Increased ability to read and understand words as evidenced in reading work lists and texts.

PLANNING FOR LEARNING TOOL

NEEDS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES



Adapted from Burkhart, P. and Reuss, S. (1993), *Successful Strategic Planning*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.



FROM NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO
MONITORING TO GOALS

RESOURCES ON ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

There is a good deal of published material that addresses the needs of adults with learning disabilities. Many of these are referenced in the supplementary readings.

CLEARINGHOUSES

A number of organizations disseminate information that includes materials on adults with learning differences and disabilities. Such clearinghouses include the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, and the U.S. Department of Education's Clearinghouse on Adult Education of the Office of Adult and Vocational Education, and the Clearinghouse on Disability Information of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

ORGANIZATIONS

A number of organizations address the needs of adults who learn differently and adults with learning disabilities. These include the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, and the Orton Dyslexia Society. Some may have branches or members in your community. Others may be located at the state capitol.

SPECIALISTS AND PROGRAMS

There are many reputable specialists and programs that work with adults with learning disabilities. You may want to contact some of the organizations listed above for referrals.

ASSESSMENTS

Many organizations have the capacity to provide competent identification of learning disabilities and their assessment. For a useful overview of this area see "Adults with Learning Disabilities: How to get an appropriate assessment of the problem." A copy of this is in your supplement.

LAWS

Three Federal laws mandate accommodating or addressing the needs of adults with disabilities — including those with learning disabilities: The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act established criteria for identifying clients with disabilities. Adult education programs can refer students to local vocational rehabilitation officers, which may be able to fund assessment or special tutoring.

Both Section 504 (which forbids discrimination on the basis of disability in federally-funded programs) and the ADA have been used to call for accommodations. Testing accommodations are a good example that may be of importance to your students. See *Testing Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities*.

SESSION THREE EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify): _____
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was

(too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)

2. The small group activities were

(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

3. The ideas and activities presented were

(dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)

4. The mix of activities used to present the material was

(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was

(inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were
(vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)
3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)
4. The content of the training will be
(not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)
5. The theory and information presented were
(insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the

a. printed materials

(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

b. overhead transparencies

(inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

2. The technical quality of the printed materials was

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. The technical quality of the overheads was

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment

(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:

Overall Comments

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

- 159

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION ONE

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION ONE AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

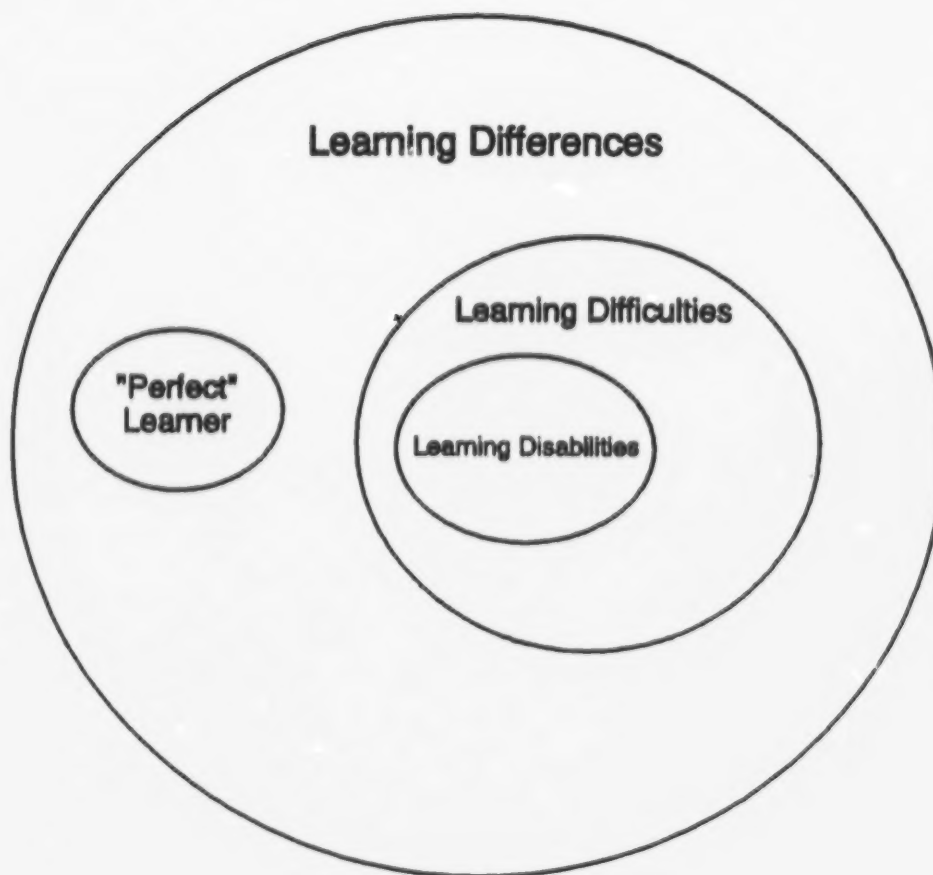
- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

- AGENDA:**
- I. Introduction, Objectives, Agenda Review
 - II. Adults First and Last
 - III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability
 - BREAK
 - IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation
 - V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person
 - VI. Interim Task Assignment
 - VIII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation

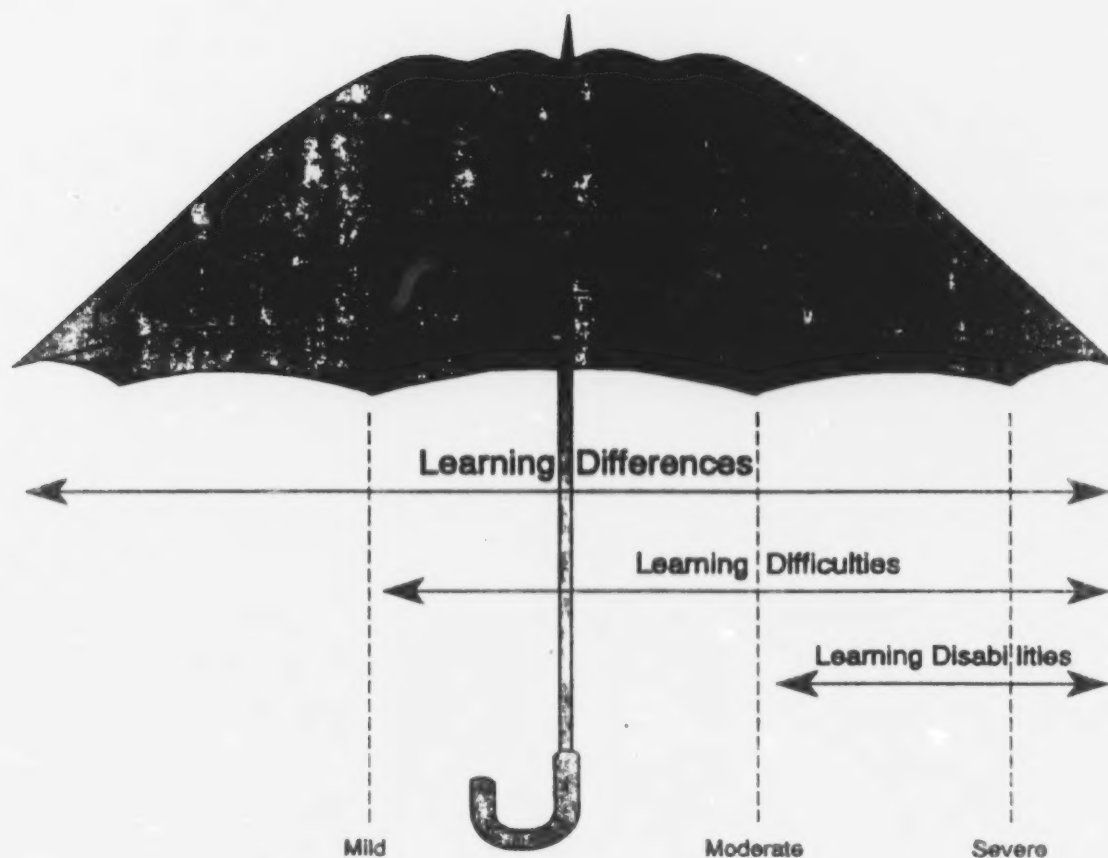
ADULTS FIRST AND LAST

M O T I V A T I O N	Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?
G O A L S	What are some educational goals adults have?
A T T I T U D E	What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?
A B I L I T Y	What strengths do adults bring to learning?
S O C I A L C U L T U R A L	What social and cultural factors affect learning?
L E A R N I N G	What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?

**VISUALIZING LEARNING DIFFERENCES,
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, AND
LEARNING DISABILITIES**



CONTINUUM OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND DIFFICULTIES



DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

COMPONENTS OF DEFINITION

1. Refers to many different (heterogeneous) learning problems.
2. Presumed to be a basic dysfunction in the central nervous system.
3. May persist across the life span.
4. Occurs with varying degrees of severity.
5. Occurs across the intellectual range.
6. May impact several areas of adult life and functions.

WHAT LEARNING DISABILITY IS *NOT*

1. It is not retardation.
2. It is not due to other disabilities.
3. It is not due to cultural or linguistic differences.

**MATRIX:
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

Student Classification Status	Has Learning Disability	Does Not Have Learning Disability
Identified		
Not Identified		

SCENARIO FOCUS QUESTIONS

PERSONAL/SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING:

LEARNING STRENGTHS:

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION TWO

171

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENTS (To Be Completed for Session Two)

During the period between Sessions One and Two, you will work with one of your students to learn more about what they want out of the learning process, their strengths, learning challenges that they have faced and how they have accommodated for areas of weakness, their support system, and where they will apply and refine the skills they develop while in your program.

This exercise has six goals. It will:

- (1) Help you see beyond what often may seem to be a set of problems (or, as some would say, "deficits").
- (2) Help you focus (or remain focused) on the students' goals.
- (3) Enable you to work with students to modify your approach to instruction in a manner that addresses their strengths, goals, and particular needs.
- (4) Provide you with a sense of them as a whole person and enable you, if necessary, to help the students identify and harness their own strengths.
- (5) Provide information that we will use in Sessions Two and Three.
- (6) Provide you with an experience (and model) for new ways to work with students in a learner-centered manner. (In order to assist you in this work, we have prepared a discussion guide and series of discussion questions, which you may use during your interview [H-?].)

Remember, returning to school is a heroic act for many learners — particularly for those who have learning disabilities. Adult learners are likely to drop out again if they do not feel comfortable in the classroom environment and if their goals and needs are not being met.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Two.

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION TWO AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

- AGENDA:**
- I. Introductions/Workshop Overview
 - II. Review of Session One
 - III. Review of Interim Task Assignment
 - BREAK
 - IV. Planning for Learning
 - V. Interim Task Assignment
 - VI. Evaluation/Wrap-Up

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW PART I

1. Why is knowing about a student's goals and interests important?
2. How can you determine learning strengths?
3. What kinds of accommodations might students with learning difficulties use?
4. What are the implications of learning strengths and accommodations for instruction for adults with learning difficulties?

STUDENT PROFILE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

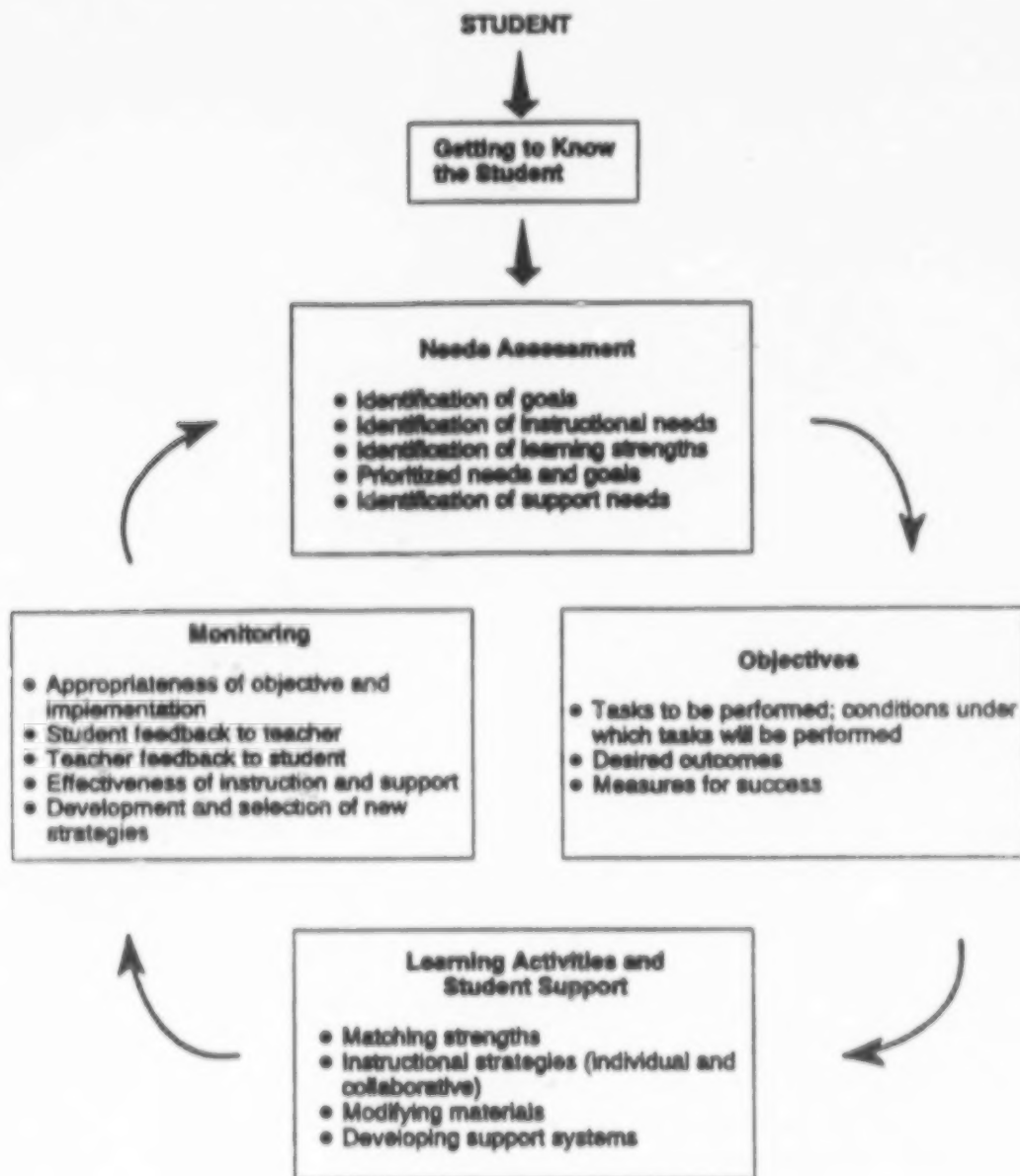
STRENGTHS:

LEARNING DISABILITIES:

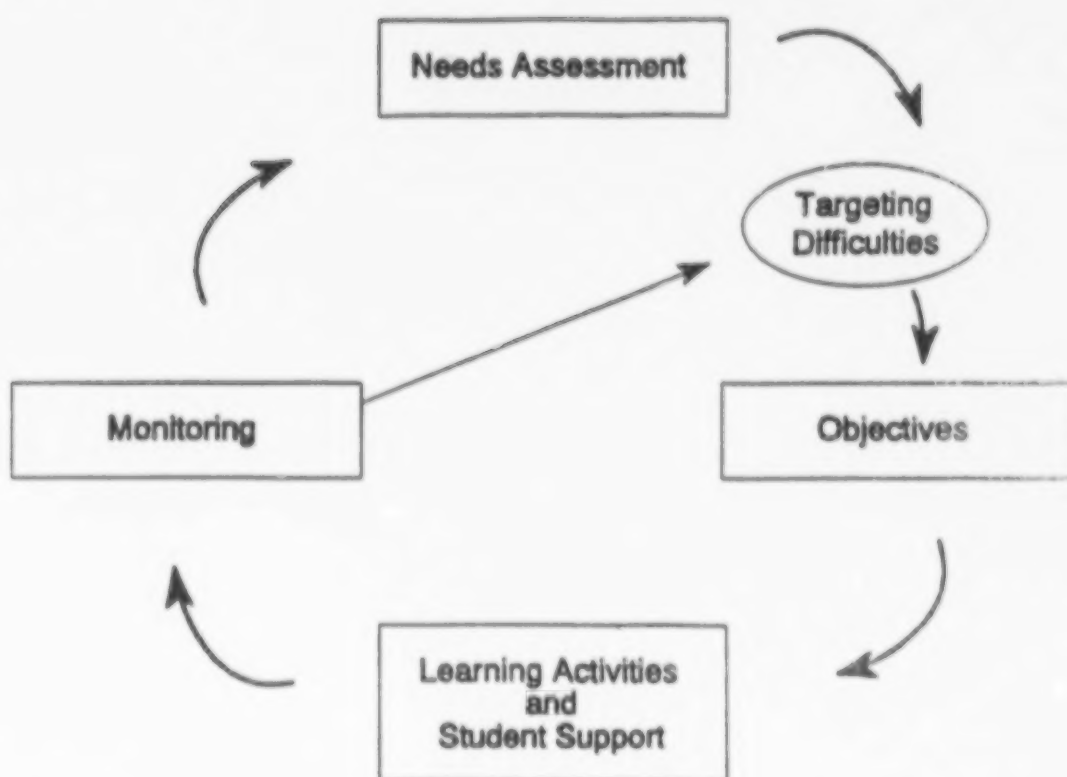
IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

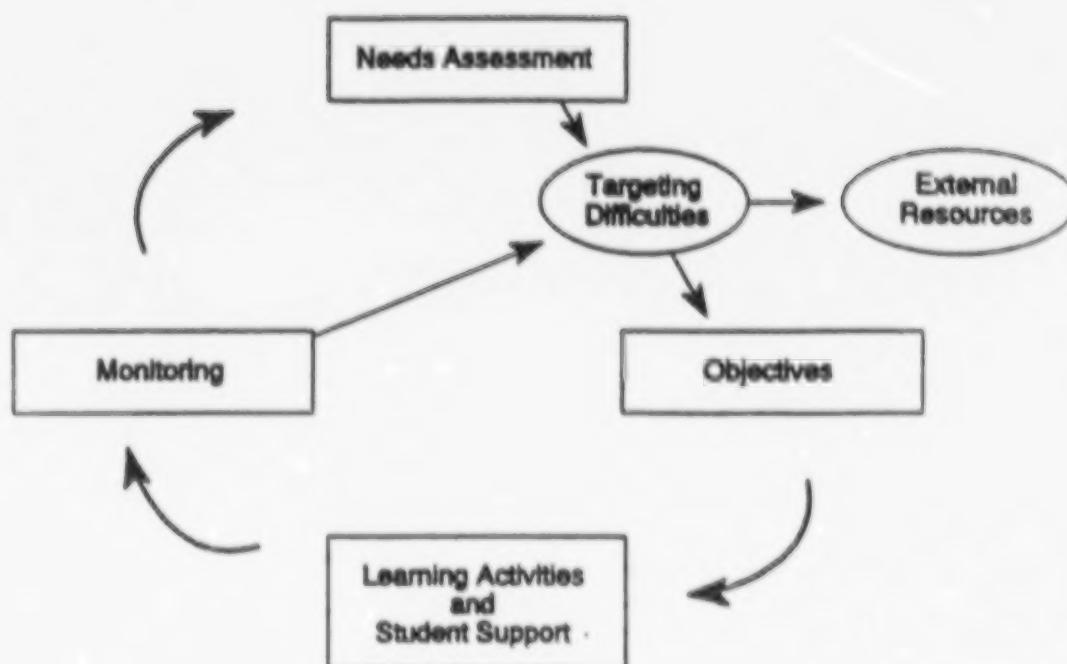
PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 1)



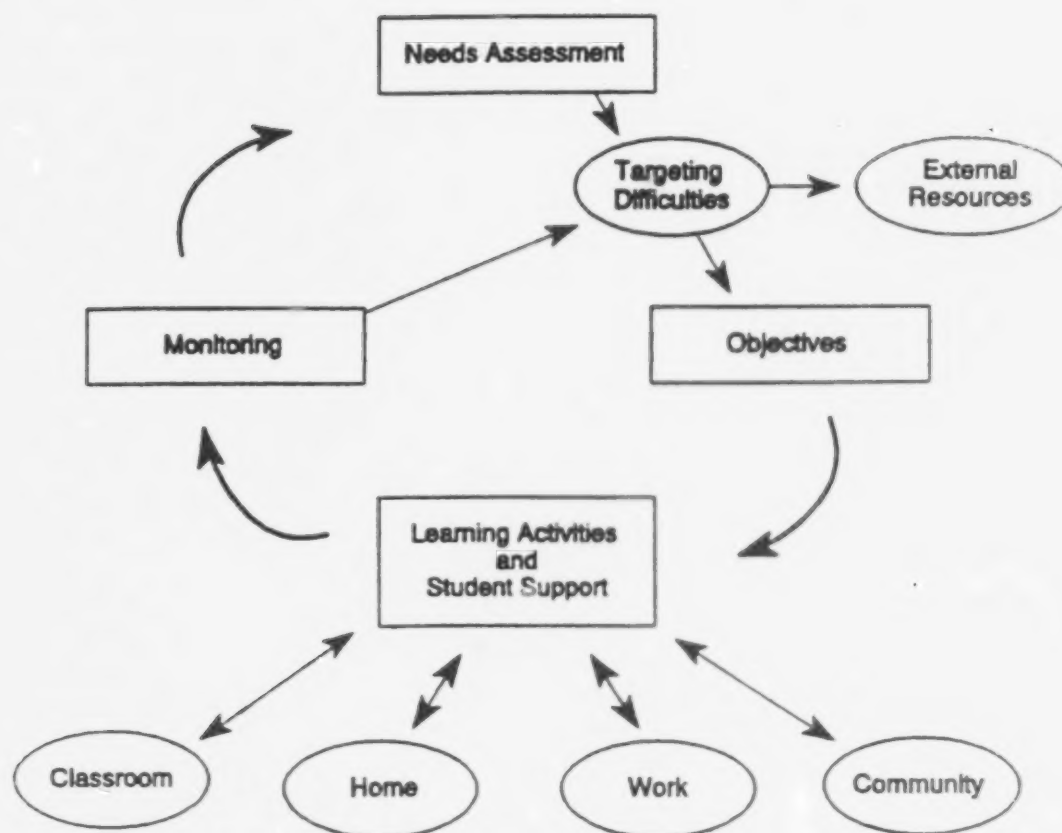
PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 2)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 3)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING (Version 4)



VIDEO FOCUS CHART

GOALS

LEARNING STRENGTHS

LEARNING STYLE

NEEDS

TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION THREE

180

LEARNING DISABILITIES SESSION THREE AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of Session Three, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
- 2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
- 3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
- 4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
- 5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

- AGENDA:**
- I. Introduction/Workshop Overview
 - II. The Reflective Practitioner
 - III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task
 - BREAK
 - IV. Planning for Learning
 - V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy
 - VI. Accessing and Using Resources
 - VII. How Do You Make It Happen?
 - VIII. Reflections on Workshop Processes
 - IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT TWO

PLANNING *GUIDE*

STUDENT GOALS:

LEARNING STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS:

MODIFICATIONS YOU INTEND TO MAKE WITH STUDENT:

LIKELY SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:

INDICATORS OF CHANGE:

TARGETING TOOL

Potential Problem Areas	<i>Difficulties</i>				
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile/ Kinesthetic	Organizational	Social/ Emotional
Input					
Integration					
Output					

INPUT, INTEGRATION, AND OUTPUT OF INFORMATION

INPUT ➡ INTEGRATION ➡ OUTPUT

INPUT	Seeing Hearing Touching Smelling Tasting	Involves reading Listening to discussion, lectures, tapes Hands-on experiences, observing
--------------	--	---



INTEGRATION	Sequencing Abstracting Organizing Memory	Organizing information into an order that makes sense, spelling Inferring meaning from words or recognition Relating new information to previously learned information Retaining information while attending and concentrating on it from a few minutes to more than 24 hours
--------------------	---	--



OUTPUT	Speaking Writing Gestures/ Facial Expressions	Involves giving oral reports, participating in discussion Writing reports/exams Understanding social cues/body language
---------------	---	---

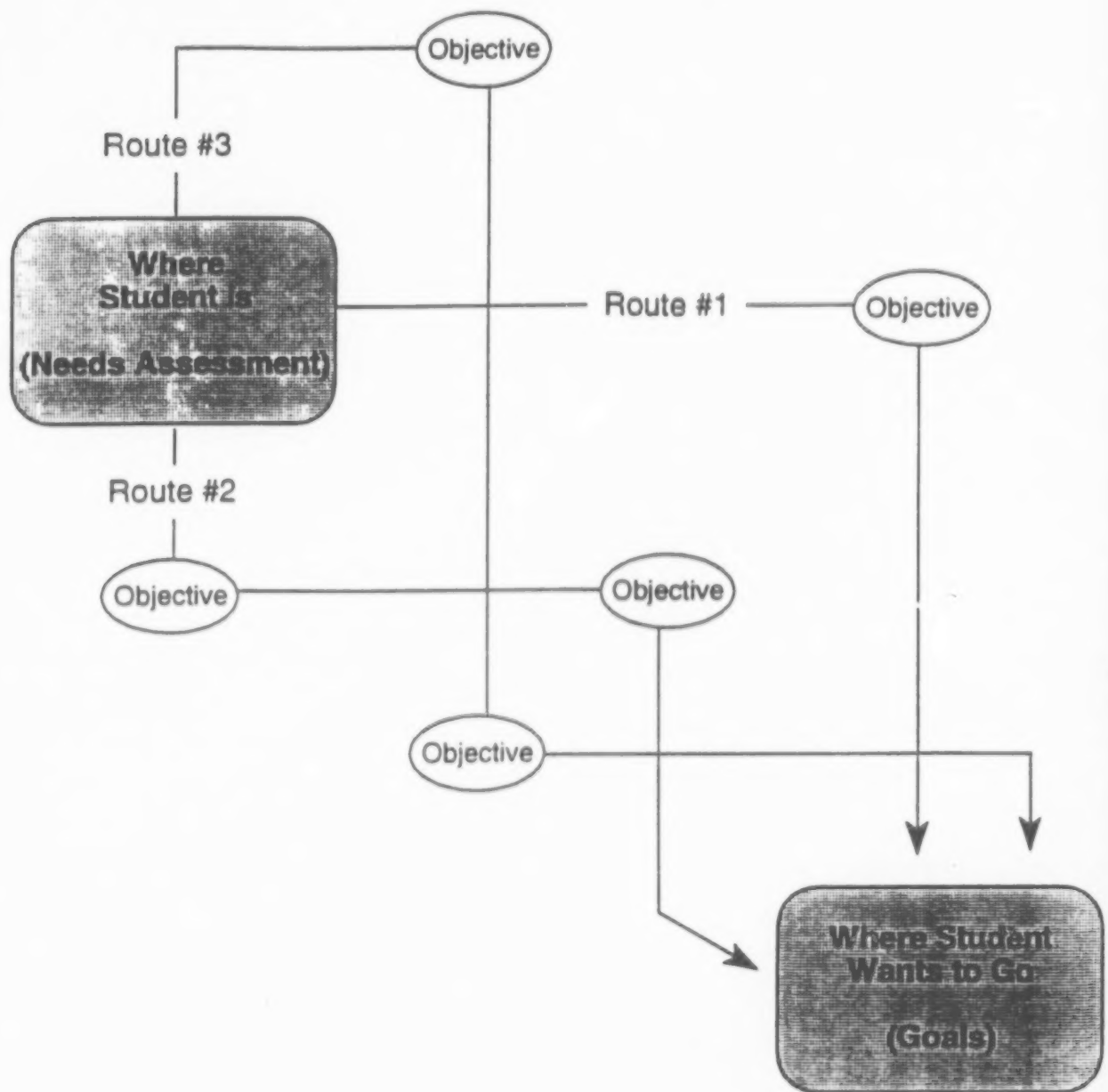
PLANNING FOR LEARNING TOOL

Goal	Learner Strengths	Learning Difficulties	Objective	Plan to Achieve Objective	Monitoring	Indicators of Achieving Objective
Passing the GED.	Visual & auditory learner. Attentive to environment. Highly motivated.	Poor vocabulary. Poor memory.	Increase vocabulary.	Focus vocabulary building measures on words that learner sees repeatedly at home, in community, at work (e.g., stop, exit, milk).	Have student read words and explain meaning. Ask student if plan is working.	Increased ability to read and understand words as evidenced in reading work lists and texts.

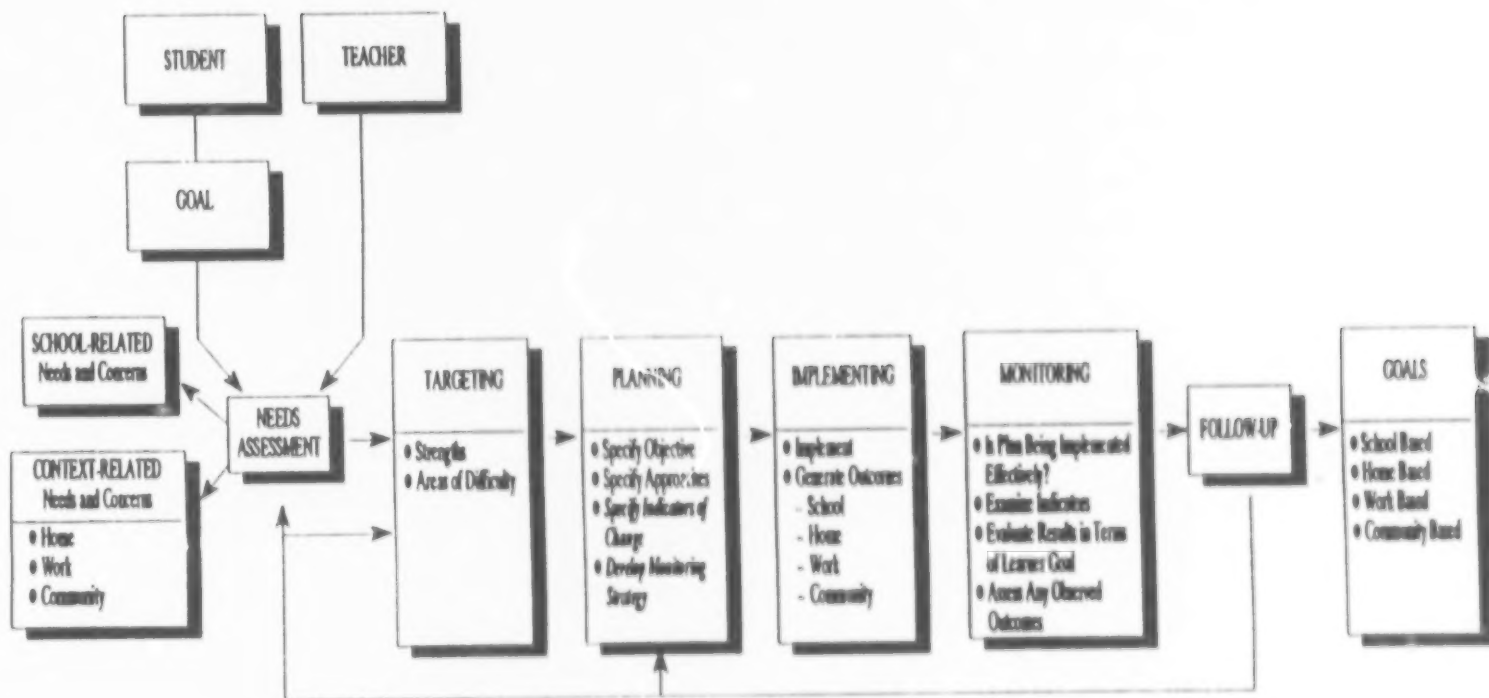
185

186

NEEDS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES



Adapted from Burkhardt, P. and Reuss, S. (1993), *Successful Strategic Planning*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.



FROM NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO MONITORING TO GOALS

REFLECTIONS ON WORKSHOP PROCESSES

Level of Comfort/Success with Material and Activities
Opportunity for Input
Opportunity for Social Learning
Variety
Experiences
Application

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS